UJ エック YJC

13club サーティーンクラブ

2

シビラ竜也

ストーリー協力 岬満

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「都市伝説」や「怪物譚」、「不思議な事件」を扱う
ミステリアスなWEBサイト――「13club」。
その主宰者・九段は「13club」に掲載する
"奇譚"を求めて、闇の中から姿を現す――
旧家で起こった殺人事件に九段が挑む伝奇ミステリー「伽考」。
オンラインゲーム上での犯罪を描く「RMT」、
アシスタントの少女・南伽が関わる奇談「笑顔」を収録!

13
サーティーンクラブ
club
2
シヒラ竜也
Shihira Tatsuya
ストーリー協力 崎潤

トピックス
ピックアップ
13 club

九段のアシスタント。いつも携帯をいじっている少女。やはり謎めいた所があり、オカルティックな情報にも詳しい。

幽伽

千明家の長女。千明家に伝わる習わしを守ろうとしていた。祖母を祀る儀礼と、春海と義式の最中に死亡してる。

千明春海

兄思いの次女。兄のことを案じようと、土師の案内役を務める。

千明夏美

三女。足が不自由。なぜか春海や千明家を嫌っている。

千明冬美

千明家の次男。新たな千明家の当主となる。

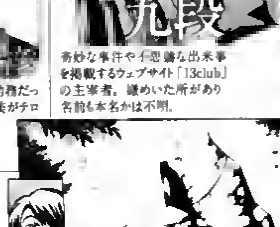
千明秋人

通信社の記者。中東勤務だったが、友人の千明初美がテロに遭い死亡したことから遺品を持って帰国。千明家を訪ねる。

七海

奇妙な事件や不思議な出来事を掲載するウェブサイト「13club」の主宰者。謎めいた所があり名前も本名かは不明。

九段



第3話「伽考」

あらすじ

「都市伝説」や「怪怖譚」、「不可思議な事件」を扱うミステリアスなWEBサイト——「13club」。主宰者・九段は「13club」に掲載する"奇譚"を求めて、闇の中から姿を現す——。

中東で通信社に勤める日本人・土師は、友人の千明初美がテロに遭い死亡したため、彼の遺品と共に帰国する。千明の実家がある儀野地方の調査を訪ねる旅の途中、ふとしたことから土師は九段と知り合う。九段はこの地方で語られていた人身御供についての奇妙な伝承を調べに来たと語る。

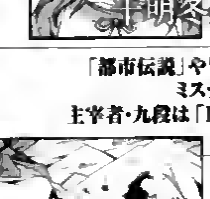
千明家に着いた土師を迎えたのは、古く広大な屋敷とそこに住む三姉妹であった。

長女の春海は、初美の告別式への参列を土師に請い、土師は千明家に逗留することになった。告別式当日、式の開始前に町に出た土師は、オトビキ岩と呼ばれる山の中腹にある祭壇のことを知り、好奇心からそこに向かう。オトビキ岩には先に幽伽、九段が訪れていた。九段はこの場所で過去、豊穣を祈って人身御供の儀式が行われていたのだと語る。

九段は土師と共に千明家に入り、春海の警心を買う。しかし、九段は広大な屋敷に疑問を抱き、土師に問う。「この家はどうやって維持出来ているのか？」と。

告別式には、次男の秋人が雇れに住む初美の母親も参列。式後、春海は千明家の習わしに従い、オトビキ岩にある祠へ向かう。土師は次女の夏美を口説きにかかり、九段は千明家の蔵を捜索し、あるものに興味を示す。その直後、オトビキ岩に向かったはずの春海が山中で死体となって発見された。

はたして春海の死は「事故」なのか、「事件」なのか。



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Ch 7--- Investigation -Act 5- ——— 5

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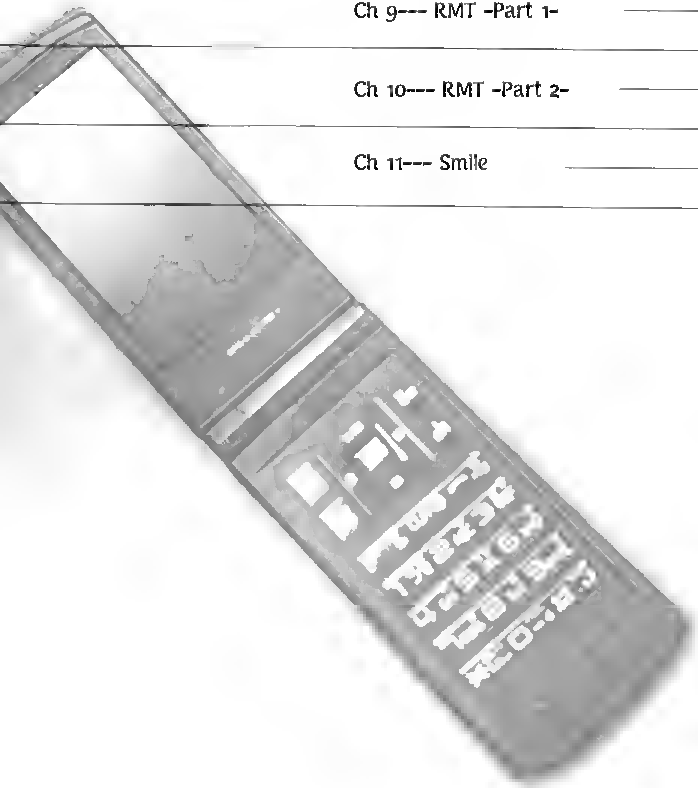
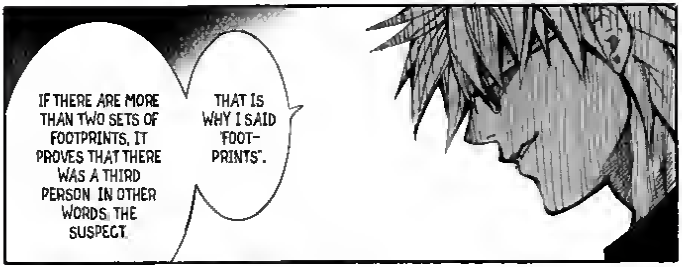
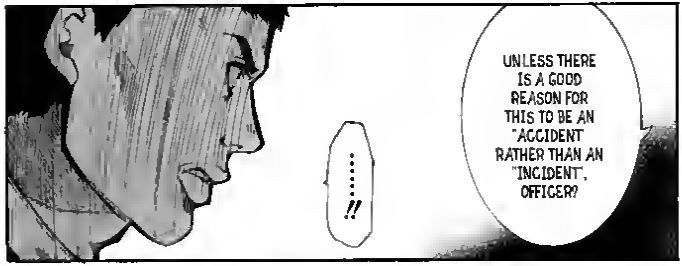


I HAVE THE PHOTOS I TOOK TODAY AT NOON AND ALSO THE CIGARETTE BUTTS DROPPED BY HAJI-SAN...
AREN'T THOSE ENOUGH TO START THE INVESTIGATION ABOUT THE "ACCIDENT" OF HARUMI-SAN'S DEATH?
HMPH...HOW FOOLISH! THAT IS COMPLETELY BASELESS REASONING!
AS FOR THOSE CIGARETTE BUTTS, NATSUMI-SAN COULD HAVE STEPPED ON THEM WHILE LOOKING FOR HARUMI-SAN AROUND OTOBIKI STONE!


IF THERE ARE MORE THAN TWO SETS OF FOOTPRINTS, IT PROVES THAT THERE WAS A THIRD PERSON. IN OTHER WORDS, THE SUSPECT.
THAT IS WHY I SAID "FOOT-PRINTS".

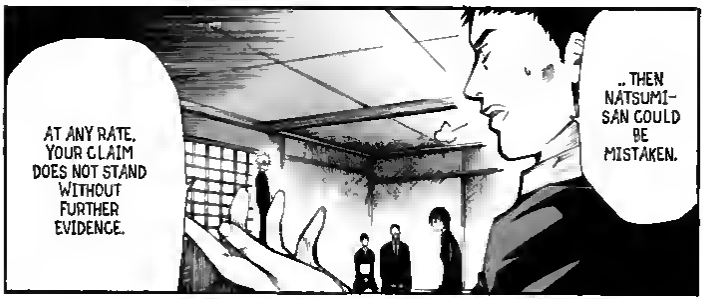

UNLESS THERE IS A GOOD REASON FOR THIS TO BE AN "ACCIDENT" RATHER THAN AN "INCIDENT", OFFICER?
……!!

…NA-TSUMI-SAN!!
!
THERE WASN'T ANYONE AT OTOBIKI STONE WHEN YOU WERE THERE, CORRECT?!
……
YES... BUT...
ざわ…

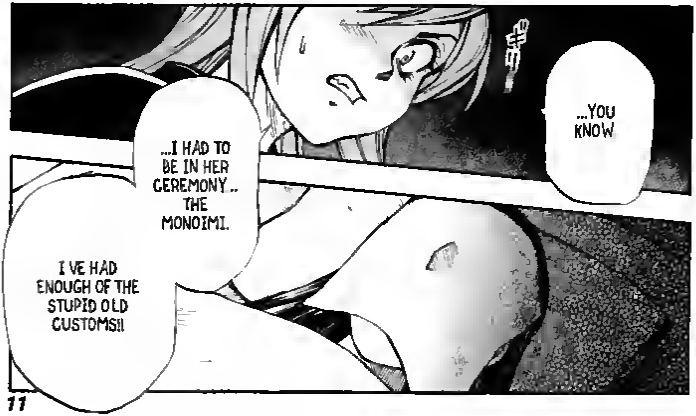
..DID SOMETHING HAPPEN?
.....
...I THOUGHT IT WAS JUST MY IMAGINATION AT THE TIME, BUT...
ﾄﾞｷﾄﾞｷ
...THE OTOBIKI STONE...

NEE-SAN...?!
A PRESENCE
AND YOU HAVE NEVER FELT IT BEFORE?
YES. THE PATH IS VERY CROOKED, AND THERE IS A THICKET NEAR THE END.
AND UNTIL YOU GET THROUGH IT, YOU CAN'T SEE ANY-THING..
EDGE.
OTOBIKI STONE
SHRINE
PATH

WHICH MEANS THAT SOMEONE WAS THERE..?
!
DID YOU SEE ANYONE...?
...NO, I DIDN'T SEE ANYTHING CLEARLY...
...I'M SORRY.
.....


..THEN NATSUMI-SAN COULD BE MISTAKEN.
AT ANY RATE, YOUR CLAIM DOES NOT STAND WITHOUT FURTHER EVIDENCE.

...INCIDENT. ACCIDENT. WHO CARES?
FUYUMI..!

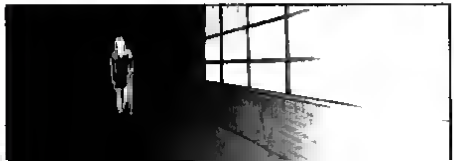

...YOU KNOW
...I HAD TO BE IN HER CEREMONY.. THE MONOIMI.
I'VE HAD ENOUGH OF THE STUPID OLD CUSTOMS!!

FUYUMI!!!
HMPH.. BECAUSE OF THE WORTHLESS CUSTOMS THAT WERE FORCED ON ME, MY LEG...
AND THEN...
NATSUMI NEE-SAN...
!!

FU... FUFU.
THAT'S RIGHT. YOU ARE ON HER SIDE.
BUT AS FOR ME..
I DON'T FEEL WELL, SO I'LL BE TAKING MY LEAVE.
GOOD RIDDANCE ...!

FUYUMI-SAMA, I WILL TAKE YOU TO YOUR ROOM
I DON'T NEED YOUR HELP!
I CAN GO BY MYSELF...

...NIRE-SAN.
HE IS TAKING CARE OF MOTHER IN THE DETACHED HOUSE.
AND HE IS ..?



.....
..KUDAN-SAN, THERE'S ONE THING I WANT TO ASK YOU..
WHEN YOU SAY AN "INCIDENT",
ARE YOU SAYING THAT ONE OF US KILLED HARUMI-NEE?

WHICH LEADS TO THE POSSIBILITY OF FIGHTING OVER INHERITANCE.
...I ONLY SUGGESTED IT AS A POSSIB-ILITY.
THE ELDEST SON THE HEAD OF THE FAMILY, DIES, AND THEN THE ELDEST DAUGHTER ALSO DIES-

WE WILL NOT BE ABLE INVESTIGATE THE OTOBIKI STONE AT NIGHT.
THE PREFECTU-RAL POLICE WILL BE HERE AS WELL.
..ANYWAY, REGARDLES S OF WHAT IT WAS, IT S BEST TO WAIT FOR MORNING.

ピカッ
!
WE'LL TAKE OUR LEAVE NOW, HAJI-SAN.
SEE YOU TOMOR-ROW, OFFICER.

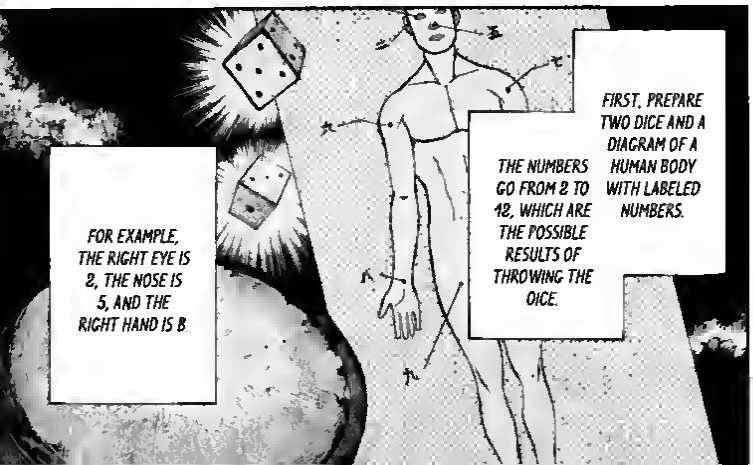
WILL YOU TELL ME EVERYTHING YOU KNOW WHEN WE GET BACK?
.....!
I SEE...
SO SOMETHING LIKE THAT HAPPENED...
BUT...WAS IT REALLY A MURDER...?
TO THINK THAT SOMEONE HERE KILLED HARUMI-SAN FOR THE INHERITANCE ...
I CAN'T BELIEVE IT...

HEY NOW... YOU SHOULD KNOW WHEN TO BE SERIOUS...
ヴィヴィ
KUKUKU.. BUT I THAT WAS ON MY MIND!
IT SEEMS LIKE YOU WERE QUITE TAKEN WITH HARUMI-SAN.

THROUGHOUT HISTORY, THERE WERE ONLY TWO MOTIVES FOR MURDER..
IF IT ISN'T FOR MONEY...IT S BECAUSE OF HATI

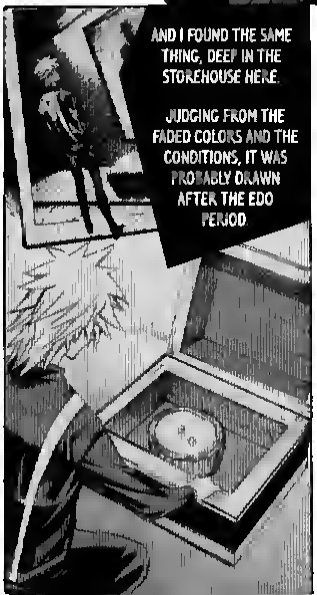
..WELL, I GUESS IT'S TRUE THAT IN HER CASE, IT FEELS MORE LIKELY..
Although it's not nice of me to say..
HAJI-SAN.
DO YOU KNOW WHAT ROUSHAITSU* IS?
NO ..WHAT IS THAT?

TN: THE KANJI USED LITERALLY MEANS "FLESH DICE"

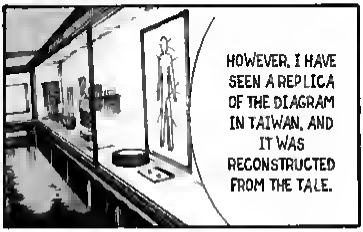

FIRST, PREPARE TWO DICE AND A DIAGRAM OF A HUMAN BODY WITH LABELED NUMBERS.
THE NUMBERS GO FROM 2 TO 12, WHICH ARE THE POSSIBLE RESULTS OF THROWING THE DICE.
FOR EXAMPLE, THE RIGHT EYE IS 2, THE NOSE IS 5, AND THE RIGHT HAND IS 8.

THEN THE BODY PART WITH THE NUMBER THAT APPEARS ON THE DICE IS CUT OFF
!!
IT WAS SAID TO HAVE BEEN CREATED IN THE SHANG DYNASTY OF ANCIENT CHINA, DURING THE REIGN OF THE EXTREMELY ILL-REPUTED ZHOU WANG.
IT WAS A CRUEL WAY OF KILLING CRIMINALS SUCH AS POLITICAL OFFENDERS.
THE DICE WERE ROLLED THREE TIMES, AND THE PRISONER WAS CUT THREE TIMES.. ANYONE WHO WAS STILL ALIVE AFTER THAT WAS RELEASED.

SINCE THEY WILL NOT BE TREATED, THE PRISONERS CANNOT ESCAPE DEATH BY BLOOD LOSS WHEN AN ARM OR A LEG IS LOST. PERHAPS THE TRULY LUCKY ONES GOT AWAY WITH LOSING JUST EYES AND EARS.
AND IT IS REPEATED 3 TIMES...WHAT A WELL CALCULATED PERCENTAGE.
WITH ELEVEN NUMBERS, FOUR OF THEM ARE PARTS OF ARMS AND LEGS. THERE IS MORE THAN 1/3 POSSIBILITY THAT AN ARM OR LEG WILL BE CHOSEN.


AND I FOUND THE SAME THING, DEEP IN THE STOREHOUSE HERE.
JUDGING FROM THE FADED COLORS AND THE CONDITIONS, IT WAS PROBABLY DRAWN AFTER THE EDO PERIOD.

DID ALL THAT REALLY HAPPEN..?
IT WASN'T RECORDED IN ANY HISTORY BOOKS, SO IT IS JUST AN URBAN LEGEND.


HOWEVER, I HAVE SEEN A REPLICA OF THE DIAGRAM IN TAIWAN, AND IT WAS RECONSTRUCTED FROM THE TALE.

A CERTAIN SACRIFICE...IN EXCHANGE FOR OFFERINGS.
THROWING THE DICE IS LIKE BEING GRANTED "FORTUNES FROM THE HEAVENS".
IN THIS EXTREMELY CRUEL GAME, THE HIDDEN ELEMENT, RATHER THAN "LUCK" IS MORE LIKE "GOD'S SAVING GRACE".
I AM GUESSING THAT...
HARUMI-SAN WAS AN ART COLLECTOR.
BUT IT HAS ABSOLUTELY NO VALUE AS A PIECE OF ART.
THE QUESTION IS, "WHY WOULD THIS HOUSE HAVE SOMETHING LIKE THAT?"
!?
PERHAPS THE CHIGIRA FAMILY HAS KEPT IT AS A CEREMONIAL PROP?
THAT'S TRUE...

THEY REALLY USED IT FOR SOME KIND OF PURPOSE...!
I DARESAY THAT THE CHIGIRA FAMILY HAS BEEN PRACTICING "ROUSHAITSU".

AND THE SPECIFIC BODY PART WAS DETERMINED USING THAT TOOL WHEN YOU THINK OF IT THAT WAY, EVERYTHING MAKES SENSE.
TO GIVE A PART OF THE BODY TO GOD AS OFFERING...
BU..BUT, I CAN'T BELIEVE SOMETHING LIKE THAT REALLY...

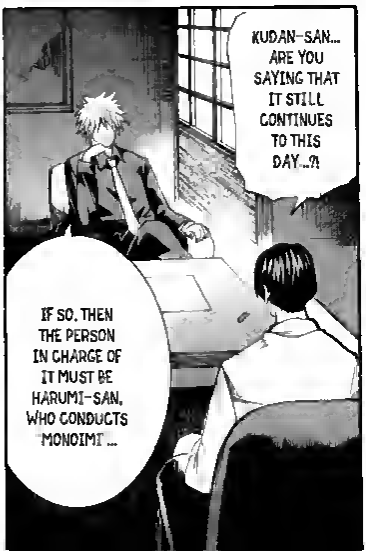
...WE WOULD KNOW IF WE ASK THE PEOPLE IN QUESTION.
HUH ...?

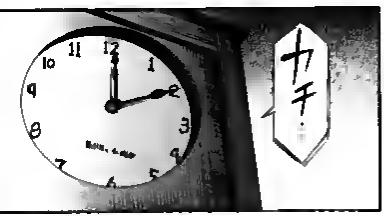
THE STORY DURING THE EDO PERIOD I INTRODUCED AND THE LEGEND OF THE OTOBIKI STONE ARE PART OF IT
ORIGINALLY, IN ORDER TO PRAY FOR WEALTH AND GOOD HARVEST, THERE WAS A TRADITION OF [illegible] OFFERINGS' IN THESE PARTS
THE INTERPRETATION OF THE GAME WAS CHANGED AND INTEGRATED TO THE LEGEND OF HUMAN OFFERINGS
AND WHEN THIS ROUSHAITSU MADE IT HERE IN THE EDO PERIOD

HAJI-SAN.. CAN'T YOU FEEL IT? THERE'S SOMETHING WRONG WITH THIS FAMILY!
THE ELDEST HARUMI-SAN HAS A THROAT AFFLICTION AND THE YOUNGEST FUYUMI-SAN CAN'T MOVE HER LEG...
ARE THOSE SIMPLY COINCIDENCE?

……!

THAT IS MORE THAN ENOUGH REASON TO BE HATED.


KUDAN-SAN... ARE YOU SAYING THAT IT STILL CONTINUES TO THIS DAY...?!
IF SO, THEN THE PERSON IN CHARGE OF IT MUST BE HARUMI-SAN, WHO CONDUCTS 'MONOIMI'...


カチ

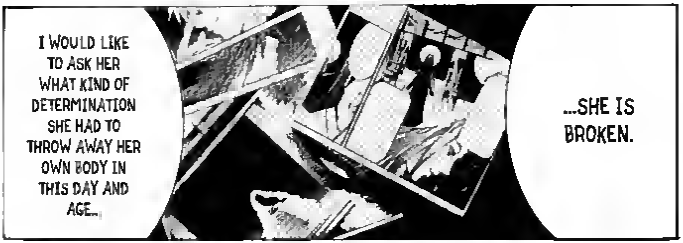
.. IT'S ALREADY THIS LATE.
LET'S REST, EARLY TOMORROW–

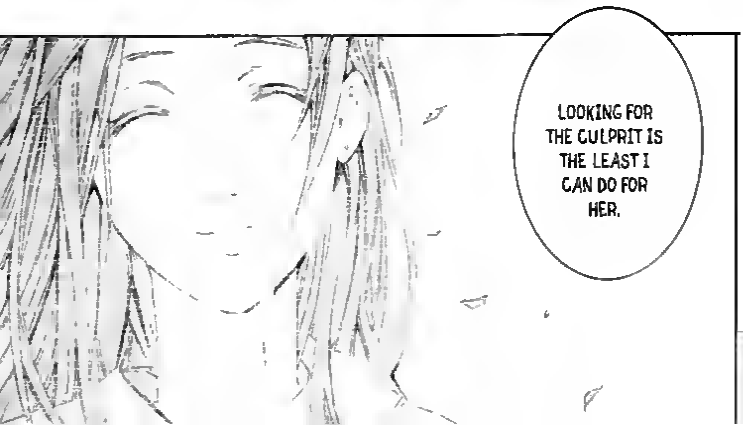
ボーン
ボーン…

WHAT IS THE REAL REASON YOU WANT TO EXPOSE THE TRUTH OF THE MATTER?
...KUDAN-SAN. ONE MORE THING.

COULD IT BE... HARUMI-SAN?
. RATHER THAN SOME KIND OF REASONING, IT'S JUST A 'HUNCH' THAT I HAVE FROM MY EXPERIENCES.

...AS EXPECTED, HAJI-SAN, YOUR HUNCH IS ONLY WHEN IT COMES TO "WOMEN"
FU...
FU FU...! HAHA HAHA!


I WOULD LIKE TO ASK HER WHAT KIND OF DETERMINATION SHE HAD TO THROW AWAY HER OWN BODY IN THIS DAY AND AGE...
...SHE IS BROKEN.


LOOKING FOR THE CULPRIT IS THE LEAST I CAN DO FOR HER.

IT'S THOSE TWO, INSPECTOR KUBOZUKA.
THEY ARE THE REFERENCES IN THIS CASE, HAJI-SAN AND...

AH, THEY'RE HERE.

IT'S BEEN A WHILE, ASSISTANT INSPECTOR KUROZUKA.
UHM
OH! IF IT AIN'T KUDAN!
OI, WHAT A COINCIDENCE!
HOW ARE YOU THESE DAYS? HAS IT REALLY BEEN 4 YEARS SINCE I LAST SAW YOU?
You haven't grown old at all
UM... HAVE YOU TWO ..?
YEAH, AS FOR WHEN I MET 'IM, YOU KNOW THE CASE REGARDING THE DISAPPEARANCES OF YOUNG GIRLS AROUND THIS AREA ABOUT 5 YEARS AGO?
THIS GUY HERE REALLY HELPED OUT WITH SOLVING THE CASE.
HUH...?

THE CRIMINAL WAS AN INTERNET ADDICT. HE CONTINUED TO POST ANONYMOUSLY ON FORUMS STATING HIS NEXT CRIME AND HARASSING THE FAMILIES OF THE VICTIMS.
AT THE TIME, THE PREFECTURAL POLICE WEREN'T EQUIPPED FOR INVESTIGATIONS ONLINE, SO HE GAVE US A LOT OF ADVICE.

BUT HIS KNOWLEDGE OF THE NET HELPED TO REVEAL WHO THE TRUE CULPRIT WAS.
WOW...

I THOUGHT YOU ONLY GET INVOLVED IN CASES INVOLVING THE NET...
..BUT HEY, WHY DID YOU COME TO THIS PLACE IN THE MIDDLE OF NO-WHERE?

ORIGINALLY, THE CRIMINAL WROTE SUSPICIOUS POSTS ON KUDAN'S SITE "13 CLUB"..
AT FIRST, KUDAN HIMSELF WAS ALSO A SUSPECT..
13club
Enter

IT IS THE SAME WITH THIS CASE.
YES.
?
WELL OFFICER FUJIWARA, I'LL BE RETURNING TO THE INVESTIGATION, SO TAKE KUDAN'S WORDS TO HEART.
YES SIR...!
...HEH! WELL, I KNOW NOTHING ABOUT IT, SO I'LL BE NEEDING YOUR HELP IN THE INVESTIGATION.
THE POSSIBILITIES ARE HIGH, BUT THERE'S ALWAYS A SLIM CHANCE...

WHY DID THIS HAD TO HAPPEN
BRO-THER...
HELP!

13 CLUB

by SHIHIRA Tatsuya

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13 Club ch 7

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Translator: cookie_on_fire
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STORY 3: INVESTIGATION ACT 6

MOTHER?

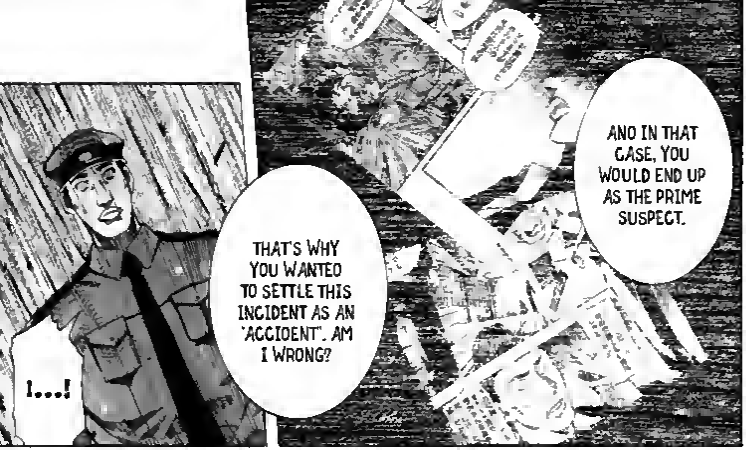
I'M TRULY SORRY.
I DO NOTHING BUT CAUSE TROUBLE.
BUT... EVERYTHING IS FINE NOW.
?
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
SFX: DRIP DRIP

SINCE HATSUMI IS DEAD, THE FAMILY...

BY THE WAY KUDAN-SAN,
WHAT DID YOU MEAN WHEN YOU SAID THIS INCIDENT WAS RELATED TO THE NET?
SFX. STARE
HM-
KUDAN-SAN?
W-WHAT THE HELL?
HE'S CREEPY
.....

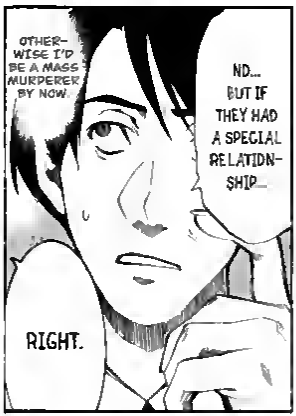
?
THE SWELLING ON YOUR CHEEK IS GOING DOWN.
.....
!!
WH...
WHAT?
BECAUSE YOU MET HARUMI-SAN LAST NIGHT, RIGHT?
YOU WANTED TO SETTLE THIS MATTER AS AN ACCIDENT...
I HEARD THAT YOU USUALLY COURTED HER, SO I GUESS YOU TRIED TO MAKE SOME ADVANCES AT HER YESTERDAY.
I MET HARUMI-SAN JUST BEFORE SHE LEFT THE MANSION, SO I'M QUITE CERTAIN SHE MET YOU AFTER.

BUT TALKING TO HER AFTER THE FUNERAL WAS BAD TIMING
YOU HAD AN ARGUMENT AND IN THE END HARUMI-SAN SLAPPED YOU
THE SWELLING IN YOUR CHEEK IS ALREADY GOING DOWN. BUT THERE ARE SOME SCRATCHES LEFT BY HER NAILS
AND WHEN HARUMI-SAN'S CORPSE WAS FOUND, YOU REALISED IT WOULD BE THE END FOR YOU.
YOU THOUGHT, "IF THIS PROGRESSES AS AN INCIDENT, MY SKIN MAY BE FOUND UNDER HARUMI-SAN'S NAILS DURING THE AUTOPSY."


AND IN THAT CASE, YOU WOULD END UP AS THE PRIME SUSPECT.
THAT'S WHY YOU WANTED TO SETTLE THIS INCIDENT AS AN "ACCIDENT". AM I WRONG?
!...!

N-NO WAY HE IS HARUMI-SAN S...
NO, I DON T THINK SO.
HAJI-SAN. WOULD YOU KILL A WOMAN JUST BECAUSE SHE REJECTED YOU?

HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH HARUMI-SAN WAS AT MOST A RUMOR IN THE FAMILY.
IT'S UNLIKELY THAT THEY HAD SUCH AN INTIMATE RELATION-SHIP.

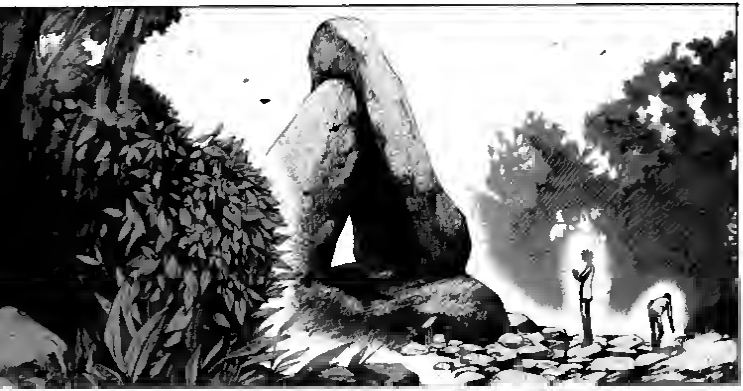

OTHER-WISE I'D BE A MASS MURDERER BY NOW.
ND... BUT IF THEY HAD A SPECIAL RELATION-SHIP...
RIGHT.

I ADMIT IT!
JUST PLEASE, KEEP IT TO YOURSELF AND SMOOTH OVER THIS SITUATION!
IF NOT I... I...!
YOU INSISTED IT WAS AN ACCIDENT BECAUSE YOU FEARED IT WOULD BECOME A SCANDAL.
.....
Y-YES. I AGREE. BUT KEEP IT QUIET TO THE END.
ISN'T IT BETTER IF WE SEARCH FOR THE CULPRIT TOGETHER?
EVEN IF I KEEP IT TO MYSELF, YOU'LL BE IN A PRECARIOUS SITUATION IF AN AUTOPSY IS PERFORMED.

!
WILL YOU CHECK WHAT I SAID YESTERDAY?
OF COURSE I WON'T TALK ABOUT IT.
INSTEAD...
.....!
THE CIGARETTE BUTTS.
YES, THAT AND COMPARING THE PICS OF THE PLACE.

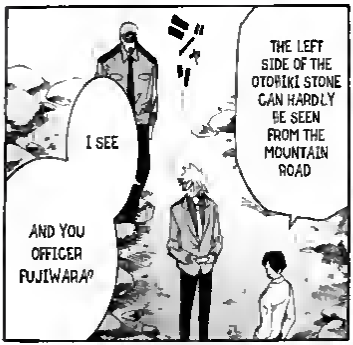
ドドド…

NATSUMI-SAN WALKED DOWN THIS MOUNTAIN ROAD AND ARRIVED AT THE OTOBIKI STONE



BUT AT NIGHT, IT'S ONLY NATURAL NOT TO SEE ANYTHING...
THIS BUSHES MAKE IT HARD TO SEE THE LEFT SIDE OF OTOBIKI STONE FROM THE ROAD.

.....


THE LEFT SIDE OF THE OTORIKI STONE CAN HARDLY BE SEEN FROM THE MOUNTAIN ROAD
I SEE
AND YOU OFFICER FUJIWARA?

WELL

HOW IS IT GOING, KUDAN-SAN? ANY NEW DISCOVERIES?
I CAN'T NOTICE ANY CHANGES FROM THE PICTURES.. DID YOU FIND ANYTHING OUT?

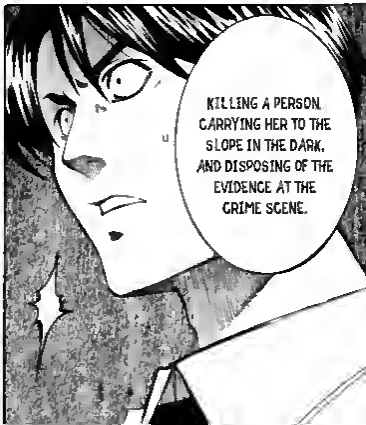
I SEARCHED ALL OVER THE PLACE BUT...
THERE ARE NO CIGARETTE BUTTS ANYWHERE
!
IT'S SETTLED THEN.
LAST NIGHT, SOMEONE WAS WAITING HERE FOR HARUMI-SAN.
.....
I HEARD HARUMI-SAN'S DEATH WAS CAUSED BY A FRACTURE OF HER CERVICAL VERTEBRAE BUT...
WERE THERE ANY OTHER EXTERNAL WOUNDS?
THERE WERE SIGNS OF A BLOW TO THE HEAD, AS WELL AS SCRATCHES ON HER ARMS AND HANDS.
THE SCRATCHES WERE CAUSED BY HER ROLL DOWN THE SLOPE.

LET'S SORT THINGS OUT.
HARUMI-SAN AND I SPOKE BRIEFLY AS SHE WAS LEAVING THE MANSION.
AND IMMEDIATELY AFTER THAT SHE MET OFFICER FUJIWARA. HOW LONG WERE YOU TALKING?
19:05, Chigira residance gate
AROUND 30 MIN-UTES..
THEN YOU TWO WERE TOGETHER FOR ABOUT 30 TO 40 MINUTES.
AND IT TAKES ABOUT 30 MINUTES TO WALK FROM THE HOUSE TO THE OTOBIKI STONE.
19:40, Chigira residence gete
IN SHORT, SHE ARRIVED HERE AROUND TEN PAST EIGHT.
20:10, Otobiki Stone
Harumi arrives and is attacked
THEN SHE WAS ATTACKED BY SOMEONE.
SHE WAS HIT IN THE HEAD AND BLACKED OUT.
THE CRIMINAL BROKE HER NECK, THEN ROLLED HER LIFELESS CORPSE DOWN THE SLOPE.
Same time?
Otobiki Stona,
Harumi dies

!
INCLUDING THE WEAPON USED TO HIT HARUMI-SAN. PROBABLY A STONE THE SIZE OF HIS HAND
HE EVEN WENT SO FAR AS TO CLEAN UP ALL THE CIGARETTE BUTTS SCATTERED ON THE GROUND
THEN THE CRIMINAL DISPOSED OF THE THINGS AROUND THE OTOBIKI STONE THAT COULD BECOME EVIDENCE.

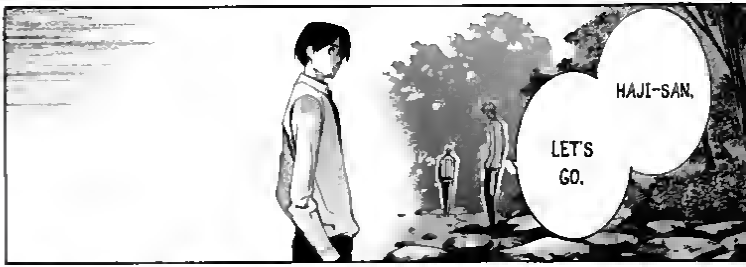
YES... WELL, HOW LONG DO YOU THINK THAT TAKES?
BUT BY DOING THAT, HE ACTUALLY MARKED THIS PLACE AS A CRIME SCENE.

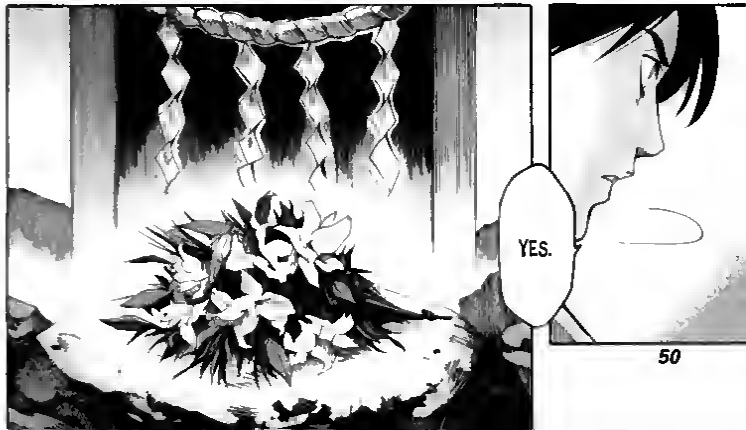
I'D GUESS THAT THAT TAKES AT LEAST 30 TO 40 MINUTES.


KILLING A PERSON, CARRYING HER TO THE SLOPE IN THE DARK, AND DISPOSING OF THE EVIDENCE AT THE CRIME SCENE.

MEANING THE CRIMINAL WAS SURELY HERE BEFORE AND AFTER 9 O'CLOCK.
AND...
NATSUMI-SAN ARRIVED HERE BEFORE 9 O'CLOCK. THUS, WE CAN DEDUCE THAT...
EITHER SHE KNOWS HARUMI-SAN'S MURDERER AND IS TRYING TO HIDE HIM...
OR...
For one reason or another, she truly saw nothing.

LAST NIGHT, OFFICER FUJIWARA CUT THE CONVERSATION SHORT SO WE DIDN'T HEAR EVERYTHING.
WE NEED TO MEET NATSUMI-SAN AGAIN AND GET ALL THE INFORMATION OUT OF HER
ハアァ…


HAJI-SAN,
LET'S GO.


YES.

BUT IF IT'S NOT AN ACCIDENT, WHO DID IT AND WHAT FOR?
HARUMI-SAN WAS TRYING HARD TO SUPPORT THE FAMILY IN THE ELDEST SON'S STEAD. BUT...

SHE PROBABLY "CROSSED THE LINE".

THE CITIES IN THE AREA CANNOT KEEP GOING.
THE INDUSTRY SUPPORTING THE CITY IS DISAPPEARING AND..
IN THE END, THE YOUNG PEOPLE WILL DISAPPPEAR TOO.

THE FATE OF THE CITY ITSELF IS TO DISAPPEAR SOONER OR LATER.

SHE TRIED TO PLAY HER ROLE AS "MONOIMI" OF THE FAMILY HEAD TO THE UTMOST PERFECTION.
THAT'S PROBABLY THE CAUSE OF THIS INCIDENT.
MEANWHILE, HARUMI-SAN DEVOTED HERSELF TO THE RITUALS OF THE CHIGIRA FAMILY THAT ONCE SUPPORTED THE CITY.

I'D RATHER NOT KNOW ABOUT FORTUNE-TELLING METHODS.
IT'S THE "REAL DEAL".
BY "MONOIMI" I MEAN HARUMI-SAN'S ROLE. PREDICTING THE BEST FISHING GROUNDS FOR THE TOWN AND CHANGES IN PRODUCT DEMAND, SURELY...

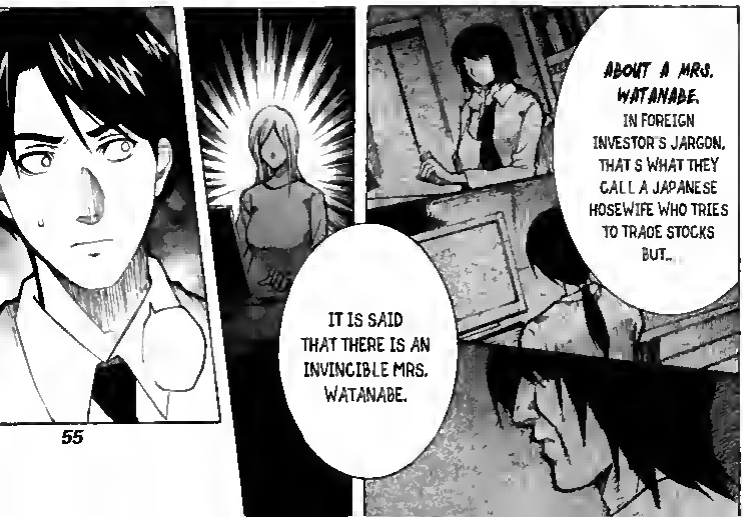
?
GOOD THING I HEARD FROM THE CHIGIRAS HOW SHE INCURRED THEIR ENMITY.
ESPECIALLY FUYUMI-SAN'S
NOT TO MENTION THAT DOING SO COULD MAKE YOU A LOT OF ENEMIES.
BUT IS IT POSSIBLE TO PREDICT ACCURATELY WITH THAT SORT OF RITUAL?

THE FAMILY'S SITUATION IS UNSHAKEABLE EVIDENCE OF THE FAILURE AND SUCCESS OF THE RITUALS.
EVIDENCE, YOU SAY?

I ASKED A FEW DAYS AGO BUT..
HAJI-SAN DON'T YOU FIND STRANGE THAT THE CHIGUIRAS ARE STILL WEALTHY?
COME TO THINK OF IT...
I HEARD THEY HAD A FORTUNE IN THE PAST

THE PROSPERITY OF THIS TOWN IS A THING OF MORE THAN HALF A CENTURY AGO... FROM THE TAISHO ERA TO THE PRE-WAR DAYS.
SURELY THE CHIGIRAS WERE ALSO WEALTHY UNTIL THAT TIME.
BUT DOES ANY OF THAT PAST FORTUNE REMAIN TODAY?
B-BUT ...

THE REAL REASON I CAME TO THIS TOWN WAS...
BECAUSE I HEARD A STRANGE STORY FROM A SPONSOR OF "13 CLUB".


ABOUT A MRS. WATANABE.
IN FOREIGN INVESTOR'S JARGON, THAT'S WHAT THEY CALL A JAPANESE HOUSEWIFE WHO TRIES TO TRADE STOCKS BUT...
IT IS SAID THAT THERE IS AN INVINCIBLE MRS. WATANABE.

"SHE" HAS ALREADY BECOME A LEGEND ON THE NET.
!
ON INVESTIGATION, I FOUND THAT "MRS. WATANABE" STARTED INVESTING 10 YEARS AGO AND HAS NEVER LOST SINCE THEN.
株式市場混
AS YOU KNOW THE STOCK MARKET HAS BEEN EMBROILED IN A RAGING STORM SINCE LAST YEAR.
BUT THERE WAS ONE INVESTOR WHO COMPLETELY SIDESTEPPED THE CRASH, AND INCREASED HER CAPITAL, AS IF SHE WERE PSYCHIC.
NO WAY!
IS THAT HARUMI-SAN?

YESTERDAY, WHEN I GOT TO USE THE NET, I MADE SOMEONE CONFIRM IT.
BINGO
AND THE IP ADDRESS OF THE MYSTERIOUS MRS. WATANABE COINCIDES WITH THE CHIGIRA RESIDENCE ADDRESS.
!!
YES, SHE EARNED IT FROM THE STOCK MARKET.
AROUND 4.5 BILLION YEN IN 10 YEARS.
THEN THE CHIGIRA FAMILY FORTUNE...

HER PARENTS CRIED AND GREATLY MOURNED HER BUT BEFORE LONG THE FAMILY FORTUNES RECOVERED AND THEY BECAME THE GREATEST MERCHANT HOUSE IN THE AREA. THAT PERSON WAS EITHER A GOD OR A DEMON
AS "MONOIMI", HER PREDICTIONS WEREN T ABOUT FISHING GROUNDS OR MERCHANDISE, BUT ABOUT THE DESIRES OF THOSE HUMANS CRAWLING IN THE NET... THE STOCK MARKET!
SUSPECTING SOMETHING THEY OPENED THE DOOR AND SAW THAT ONLY HER HEAD AND A FINGER REMAINED. THE REST HAD BEEN DEVOURED
FOLLOWING THE ANCESTRAL RITES SHE LISTENED TO GOD'S VOICE AND MADE A FORTUNE ON THE NET.
A MODERN DAY "FAIRY TALE" INDEED.

THIS GUY...!
DON'T YOU THINK THIS IS A "MYSTERIOUS STORY" WORTHY OF BEING HANDLED BY THE "13 CLUB"?

PANT
PANT
WHAT'S THE MATTER, FUMIE-SAN?
O-OFFI-CER!
LET'S HEAR NATSUMI-SAN'S TESTIMONY ONE MORE TIME...
FIRST OF ALL ...
!?
IT'S.. IT'S TERRIBLE.
NATSUMI-SAMA...

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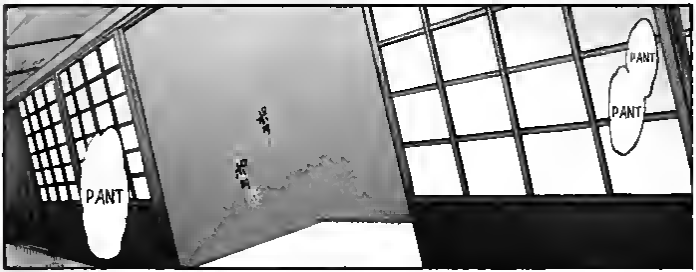
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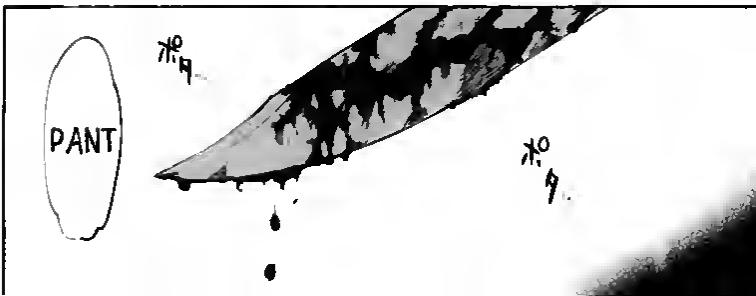
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TODAY, AT AROUND 11 O'CLOCK IN THE CHIGIRA RESIDENCE, AN INCIDENT TOOK PLACE
THE VICTIM IS NIRE SHUICHIROU. CURRENTLY UNCONSCIOUS DUE TO HEAVY BLOOD LOSS

PANT
THE SUSPECT IS THE CHIGIRA'S SECOND DAUGHTER
PANT
CHIGIRA NATSUMI.

WHAT'S THE SITUATION AT THE CRIME SCENE?

NATSUMI'S MOTHER, RYOUKO, WAS ALSO PRESENT AT THE CRIME SCENE. BUT SHE WENT INTO SHOCK. SHE IS CURRENTLY SEDATED.
SO THE NATSUMI IN QUESTION IS CONFINED IN ANOTHER ROOM AND IS STILL REMAINING SILENT?
.....
THE SCENE OF THE CRIME WAS HATSUMI-SAN'S ALTAR ROOM. THE WEAPON A SELF-DEFENSE KNIFE.
IT'S ONE OF THE BELONGINGS OF THE DECEASED CHIGIRA HATSUMI THAT WERE IN THE ROOM.

WHAT IS IT?
OFFICER FUJIWARA, I'D LIKE YOU TO INVESTIGATE SOMETHING.

THE CHIGIRA'S FAMILY REGISTER.

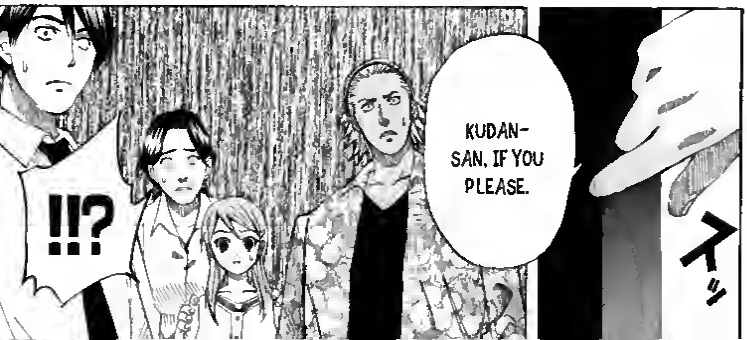
...

NATSUMI-SAN.

HEY, LET GO OF ME!
HAJI-SAN...

AKIHITO...
FUYUMI...
FUMIE-SAN...
HRK
.....!
BE QUIET AND LISTEN
RELEASE HER AT ONCE!
MY SISTER NATSUMI CAN'T POSSIBLY BE A MURDERER!

I'D LIKE YOU ALL TO BE PRESENT TO SEE IF WE ARE WRONG OR NOT.
I CAN IMAGINE HOW YOU ALL FEEL, BUT WE HAVE IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT THESE INCIDENTS.


!!?
KUDAN-SAN, IF YOU PLEASE.
スッ

!?
AS I THOUGHT AKIHITO-SAN SEEMS TO KNOW NOTHING

WH...
WHAT'S THAT CREEPY DRAWING?

AS I GUESSED THE CHIGIRA'S RITES WERE ONLY PASSED ON TO THE ELDEST SON
THE ONLY ONES WHO KNEW WERE THE ELDEST SON THE "MONOIMI", AND THE PEOPLE PRESENTED AS "OFFERINGS"

THE GHIGIRA FAMILY'S "CUSTOMS" INVOLVE TAKING A PART OF THE BODY AS AN "OFFERING" WHEN THE MONOIMI RITUAL IS PERFORMED.
TWO DICE ARE THROWN, AND THEIR SUM CORRESPONDS TO A NUMBER ON THE DRAWING
BUT ALL THREE DICE, INCLUDING THE SPARE, ARE CROOKED.
RIGHT.
CR... CROOKED YOU SAY?

T/N: LOADED, WEIGHTED OR CROOKED DIE IS ONE THAT HAS BEEN TAMPERED WITH TO LAND WITH A SPECIFIC SIDE FACING UPWARDS MORE OFTEN THAN IT NORMALLY WOULD

THE DICE ALWAYS LAND ON 2, 3 OR 6 RESPECTIVELY.
OF THE 3 DICE, ONLY 2 ARE THROWN, SO THEIR SUM CAN ONLY BE 5, 8 OR 9.
IN SHORT, ONLY THE ONES CORRESPONDING TO AN EYE AND BOTH LEGS IN THE DRAWING.

BY PERFORMING THIS RITUAL, HARUMI-SAN, THE "MONDIMI", ENHANCED HER CONCENTRATION AND INTUITION, AND PREDICTED THE FUTURE.
EYES AND LEGS ARE CHOSEN TO MATCH THE ANCIENT LEGENDS OF "ONE-EYED" AND "ONE-LEGGED DEITIES.
ONE OF YOU, FUYUMI-SAN, GAVE HER RIGHT LEG AS AN OFFERING. THE OTHER ONE, NATSUMI-SAN...
.....

THOSE TWO?
WAIT, YOU SAID AN "EYE" AND "BOTH LEGS".
THEN WHAT ABOUT HARUMI-SAN'S "THROAT"?

KNOWING THAT, I HAD OFFICER FUJIWARA CHECK THE CHIGARA'S FAMILY REGISTER
YES. AT FIRST I THOUGHT THAT HARUMI-SAN HERSELF HAD BECOME AN OFFERING AND GOTTEN HER THROAT INJURED.
BUT THE DICE USED IN THE RITUAL ALWAYS LAND ON THE SAME NUMBERS, SO IT'S IMPOSSIBLE TO GET YOUR THROAT INJURED

I'LL STATE MY CONCLUSIONS.

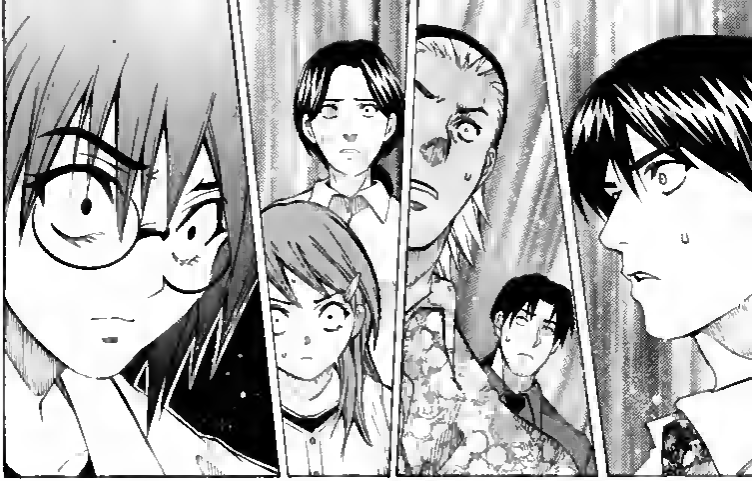
HARUMI-SAN WASN'T A MEMBER OF THE FAMILY.

IN ADDITION TO THE FAMILY REGISTER I'VE ALSO INVESTIGATED POLICE DOCUMENTS FROM 12 YEARS AGO. ACCORDING TO THEM...
HARUMI, THE CHIGIRAS ELDEST DAUGHTER, DIED FROM FOOD POISONING WHEN SHE WAS 15.
I SEE. THE MURDERED HARUMI-SAN WAS JUST ONE OF THOSE SUITABLE RELATIVES GATHERED FOR SELECTING A "MONOIMI"
THE REAL HARUMI DIED DURING THAT "SELECTION" CEREMONY.

THE CAUSE OF DEATH WAS PROBABLY A DRUG OVERDOSE.
FROM ANCIENT TIMES PEOPLE HAVE ENTERED AN ARTIFICIAL BY CONSUMING DRUGS IN ORDER TO HEAR "GOD'S VOICE".
IN THE PAST, THE CHIGARAS ALSO GAVE DRUGS TO THE CANDIDATES WHEN THE "MONOIMI" SELECTION WAS PERFORMED
THE TRAGEDY WAS THAT AS A RESULT OF THE REJECTION OF THE "MONOIMI" CUSTOM BY HATSUMI'S FATHER, THE FORMER FAMILY HEAD, THE RITUAL CAME BACK STRICTER THAN EVER
THEY PROBABLY USED A LETAL DOSE OF THE DRUG

NOT ONLY DID THE ELDEST DAUGHTER, HARUMI, DIE, BUT THE SURVIVING HARUMI'S THROAT WAS DAMAGED AS A SIDE EFFECT OF THE DRUG.
SHE, WHO HAD SURVIVED THE SELECTION PROCESS, FELT INDEBTED TO THE FAMILY THAT HAD ADOPTED HER. SHE DEVOTED HERSELF TO HER ROLE AS "MONOIMI" AND REVIVED THE GHIGIRA FAMILY.
BUT THERE WAS ALSO SOMEONE WHO RESENTED HER.
!?
ONLY NATSUMI-SAN UNDERSTOOD THE SITUATION AND COOPERATED. IN THOSE DAYS, AKIHITO-SAN AND FUYUMI-SAN WERE CHILDREN, SO THERE WAS NO REASON FOR THEM TO KNOW.
THAT'S THE MASTERMIND BEHIND HARUMI-SAN'S MURDER.

AMONG THOSE WITH A MOTIVE WERE FUYUMI-SAN WHO HAD SACRIFICED A LEG FOR THE "CUSTOM"..
AND AKIHITO-SAN OVER PROBLEMS WITH THE INHERITANCE? BUT IT WAS NEITHER.
THE ONE WHO RESENTED HARUMI-SAN THE MOST...
WAS THE MOTHER, RYOUKO-SAN. SHE IS THE CRIMINAL.



NATSUMI-SAN, LET'S SEE IF I'VE GOT THAT RIGHT.

WAS YOUR MOTHER THE PERSON YOU SAW YESTERDAY AT THE OTOBIKI STONE?

SAW NOTHING THEN BUT...
I REALLY...
NO.
MOTHER DIDN'T BELIEVE ME.
NATSUMI, DID YOU SEE ME YESTERDAY AT THE OTOBIKI STONE?
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT ...?

WHO ARE YOU TRYING TO FOOL?
AH, YES.
NATSUMI, YOU WERE GOOD FRIENDS...

...WITH THAT HARUMI.

I... I REALLY DIDN'T SEE MY MOTHER AT THE OTOBIKI STONE.
BUT SHE...
RYOUKO-SAN SHE SAW YOU. SO IT CAN'T BE HELPED.
ギギ...
IT MAKES NO DIFFERENCE KILLING ONE OR KILLING TWO.
We have no choice but to kill her.

HELP... ME.
BRO... THER...

THE ONE WHO KILLED HARUMI-SAN AND TRIED TO PASS IT OFF AS AN ACCIDENT WAS RYOUKO-SAN
AND HER ACCOMPLICE WAS NIRE-SAN
.....
WHEN HER HUSBAND PASSED AWAY, RYUOKO-SAN HAD NO CHOICE BUT TO MAKE A PAINFUL DECISION.
HER HUSBAND REJECTED THE TRADITION. THE FAMILY WAS COMING TO RUIN, AND THE CITY WAS DECLINING. AS A RESULT, HATSUMI-SAN'S GENERATION HAD NO CHOICE BUT TO RELY ON THE REJECTED TRADITION.
BUT AS A RESULT, SHE LOST HER ELDEST DAUGHTER, AND EVEN THE DEPENDABLE HATSUMI-SAN LEFT THE HOUSE DUE TO CONFLICTS WITH HARUMI-SAN
THE CHILD OF A RELATIVE WAS DRIVING OUT HER OWN CHILDREN, HURTING HER PRIDE, AND TRYING TO TAKE OVER THE FAMILY

RYUOKO-SAN CONSUMED BY AN UNJUSTIFIED RESENTMENT, BECAME MENTALLY UNSTABLE AND CONFINED HERSELF IN A DETACHED HOUSE.
DURING THAT TIME, HER HATRED TOWARDS HARUMI-SAN G REW AND HER RESENTMENT MATURED
AND WHEN THE NEW S OF HATSUMI-SAN S DEATH REACHED HER, SHE LOST HER LAST LINGERING SHRED OF REASON.

A RELATION-SHIP BORN FROM COMPAS-SION
I GUESS
OR HE WAS GIVEN MONEY

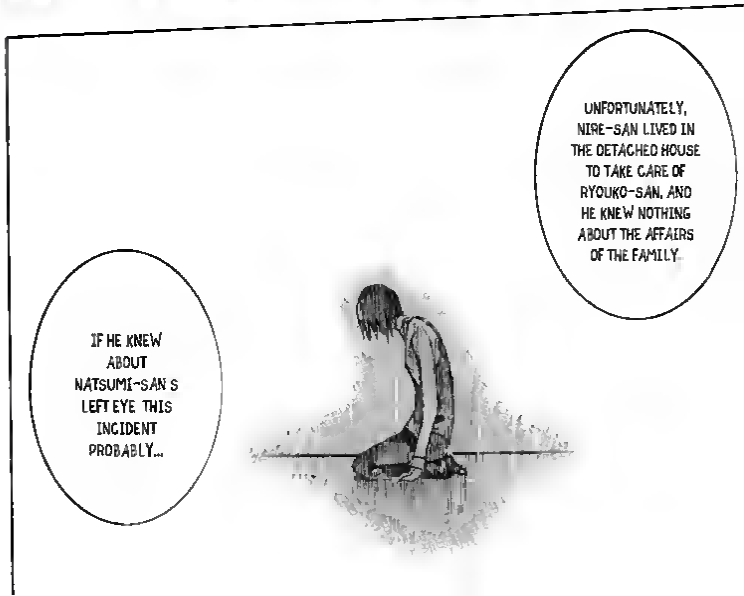
IT'S SAID THAT NIRE HAS BEEN CONSTANTLY TAKING CARE OF RYOUKO-SAN SINCE HE CAME HERE 5 YEARS AGO
THE CAUSE OF NIRE S INVOLVEMENT IN THIS INCIDENT IS PROBABLY...

THAT'S RIGHT
AND IF THERE ARE SOME DIS-AGREEMENTS ...

HU HU..
!
AHAHA..

IT'S SO STRANGE.
THAT THIS...
THIS FALSE EYE CAN SHED TEARS TOO.

AS I THOUGHT IT'S AN ARTIFICIAL EYE. YOU PROBABLY LOST THE LEFT ONE.
!
THAT'S WHY SHE ALWAYS REACTS SLOWLY TO ANY PERSON ON HER LEFT
THE PRESENCE AT OTOBIKI STONE THAT NATSUMI-SAN SENSED WAS PROBABLY HER MOTHER OR NIRE-SAN.
BUT HER LEFT EYE IS HER BLIND SPOT, SO SHE COULDN'T CONFIRM IT.


UNFORTUNATELY, NIRE-SAN LIVED IN THE DETACHED HOUSE TO TAKE CARE OF RYOUKO-SAN, AND HE KNEW NOTHING ABOUT THE AFFAIRS OF THE FAMILY.
IF HE KNEW ABOUT NATSUMI-SAN'S LEFT EYE THIS INCIDENT PROBABLY...

I...
I JUST..
FOLLOWED THE WAYS OF THE CHIGIRA FAMILY.

I WAS TOLD THAT THAT WAY, THE TOWN AND THE FAMILY WOULD PROSPER.
MY BRO-THER'S LEAVE,
THAT'S WHY I ENDURED! MY SISTER HARUMI'S DEATH,
EVEN MY OWN EYE!

AND YET...
WH-WHY DID THINGS END UP LIKE THIS?
WHERE DID EVERY-THING WENT WRONG ?
WA AA AH!

ズ
Aaah
NATSUMI-SAN..
あぁあ
あぁあ

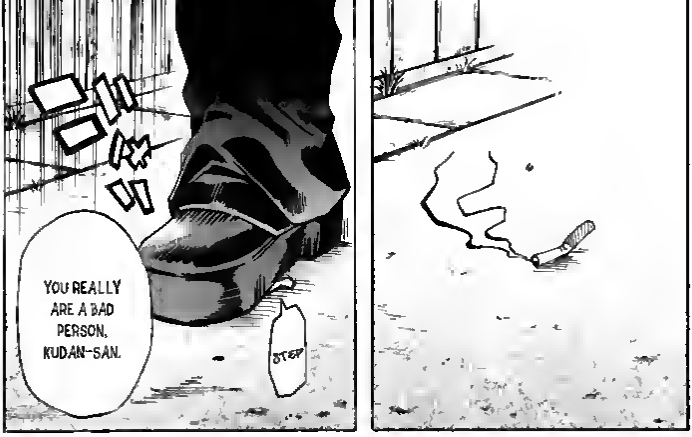
SORRY, NATSUMI.
DON T CARRY THAT BURDEN ALL ALONE, DAMNIT.

HMPH... IDIOT, MAKING ALL DECISIONS BEHIND MY BACK.
IT'S ALL RIGHT... I DON'T NEED TO BE PROTECTED ANYMORE
I CAN START WALKING ON MY OWN!

スッ
SWOOP
.....
FUYUMI-SAMA?

!
HAJI-SAN, IT'S TIME FOR US TO LEAVE
NO NEED TO WORRY. IT SEEMS LIKE IT WAS NIRE-SAN'S FAULT.
THERE ARE EXTENUATING CIRCUM-STANCES.
BESIDES ...
.....

WE ARE ONLY OUTSIDERS FROM NOW ON.


YOU REALLY ARE A BAD PERSON, KUDAN-SAN.
STEP

YOU KNEW ABOUT THE NET TRADING AND EVERYTHING YET YOU KEPT IT TO YOURSELF, DIDN'T YOU?
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

PARDON ME. I NEVER INTENDED TO HIDE ANYTHING.
I HAD ESTIMATED FROM THE START THAT OUR MRS WATANABE WAS A LANDOWNER FROM THIS AREA.
YOU HAD US DANCING IN THE PALM OF YOUR HANDS.

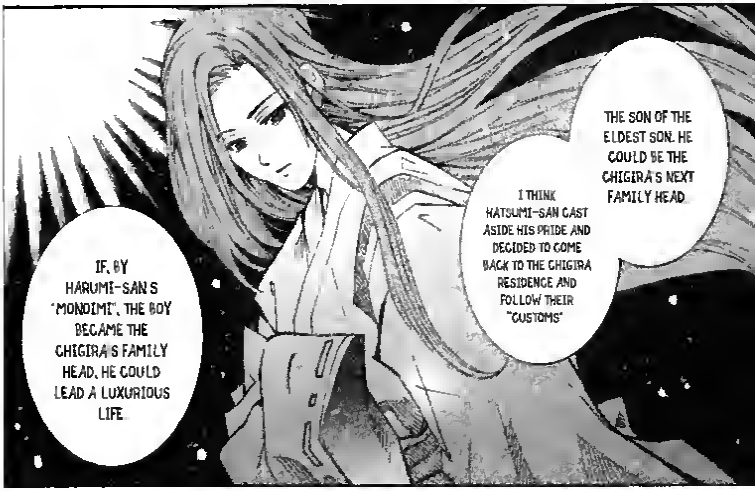
WHEN I FIRST MET YOU, I HAD CHECKED A HOUSE. THE SECOND WOULD BE THE CHIGIRA RESIDENCE.
IF YOU ASK ME, I WAS SURPRISED THAT AN INCIDENT TOOK PLACE THERE.
……

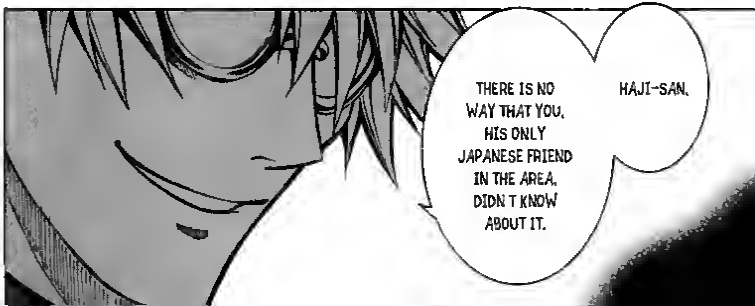
LEAVING THAT ASIDE, AREN'T YOU THE ONE WITH A SECRET, HAJI-SAN?
!?

THIS INCIDENT BEGAN BECAUSE YOU CAME TO THE CHIGIRA RESIDENCE TO BRING HATSUMI-SAN'S BELONGINGS.
WHAT ABOUT IT?

HATSUMI-SAN HATED THE CUSTOMS OF THE CHIGIRAS FROM THE START.
LEFT THE HOUSE IN SPITE OF BEING THE ELDEST SON.
BUT JUST BEFORE HIS DEATH YOU KNEW HE WANTED TO COME BACK TO JAPAN.
BUT FOR SOME REASON THERE IS A CERTAIN SOMETHING YOU DIDN'T TELL THE CHIGIRAS.
WHAT WAS HIS MOTIVE?
A "CHILD" PERHAPS?

EVERYTHING MAKES PERFECT SENSE IF WE ASSUME HATSUMI-SAN HAD A SON WITH A LOCAL WOMAN

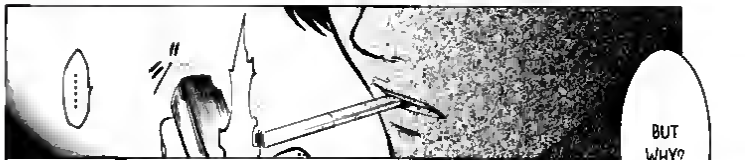

THE SON OF THE ELDEST SON. HE COULD BE THE CHIGIRA'S NEXT FAMILY HEAD
I THINK HATSUMI-SAN CAST ASIDE HIS PRIDE AND DECIDED TO COME BACK TO THE CHIGIRA RESIDENCE AND FOLLOW THEIR "CUSTOMS"
IF, BY HARUMI-SAN'S "MONDIMI", THE BOY BECAME THE CHIGIRA'S FAMILY HEAD, HE COULD LEAD A LUXURIOUS LIFE


HAJI-SAN,
THERE IS NO WAY THAT YOU, HIS ONLY JAPANESE FRIEND IN THE AREA, DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT IT.

WHY?
BECAUSE THE EXISTENCE OF A "FAMILY HEAD" WAS A LIFELINE FOR
HARUMI-SAN PROBABLY ALSO KNEW ABOUT NATSUMI-SAN'S LIFE IN THE MIDDLE EAST.

AFTER HER DAUGHTER'S DEATH, RYOUKO-SAN UNREASONABLY RESENTED HARUMI-SAN.
UNTIL NOW, SHE HADN'T MADE A MOVE AGAINST HARUMI-SAN BECAUSE HER ELDEST SON, NATSUMI-SAN, WAS ALIVE.
IN OTHER WORDS, BECAUSE HER ROLE AS "MONOIMI" HELPED NATSUMI-SAN THE "FAMILY HEAD".
ORIGINALLY, THE HEIR OF THE ONIGIRAS WAS THE ELDEST SON. IF NATSUMI-SAN HAD A SON, THIS TRAGEDY MAY HAVE BEEN AVERTED.

PROTECT... MY SISTER.
HIS SISTER. IN OTHER WORDS PROTECT HARUMI-SAN.
THAT'S WHY. IN HIS DYING MOMENTS, HE ENTRUSTED YOU, WHO KNEW OF THE CHILD EXISTENCE, WITH A TASK.
HATSUMI-SAN WAS VAGUELY AWARE OF THAT.


BUT WHY?

I DID IT ON A WHIM.
WHY DIDN T YOU TELL THE CHIGIRAS ABOUT THE EXISTENCE OF THE CHILD?

HATSUMI WAS MY ONLY JAPANESE ACQUAINTANCE IN THE MIDDLE EAST. MY BEST FRIEND THERE.
BUT...
WHEN I CAME BACK TO JAPAN, HE TURNED OUT TO BE THE POPULAR ELDEST SON OF A WEALTHY FAMILY. ...A COMPLETELY DIFFERENT PERSON.

WHEN I THOUGHT ABOUT IT, I JUDGED THAT GRANTING HIS WISH WOULD BE ABSURD.
THAT'S JUST ABOUT IT.

KUDAN-SAN, DO YOU DESPISE ME NOW?
NO, I ALREADY TOLD YOU, THAT'S WHAT I LIKE ABOUT HUMANS

BUT,

Like the merchant inviting the guest
I WONDER INVITING US INTO THEIR FAMILY WHAT KIND OF EXPERIENCE WOULD IT BE FOR THEM?
IT WAS POSSIBLY

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PANT
PANT

THERE IT IS.
WE CAN WIN IF WE LURE IT TO THE GROUND!

TCH! IT AIN'T WORTH DYING FOR THIS!
STOP WHINING! YOU VOLUNTEERED YOURSELF AS A DECOY!

STORY 4 - RMT - PART 1

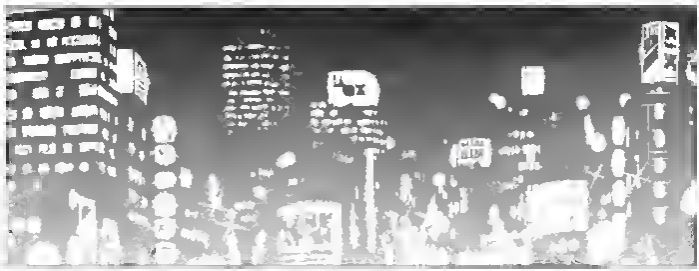
ROAR!

THERE'S NO DOUBT...
THIS IS A RARE ONE.
LEADER! EVERYTHING'S READY FOR THE PINCER ATTACK!
AL-RIGHT!
!!
IT'S COMING!
SORRY FOR THE WAIT, ASUKA! THE FLASHY PART IS ALL YOURS.

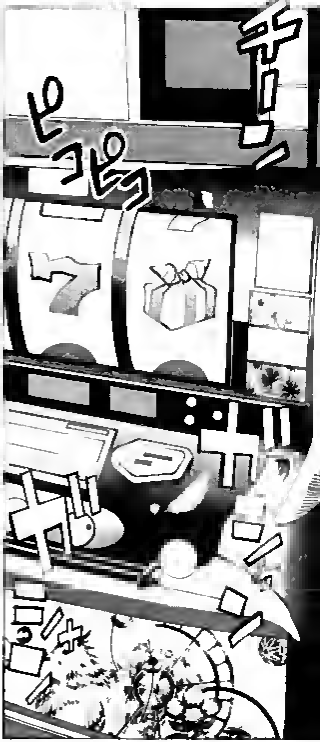
ROGER!

HEY, IS IT WORK-ING?
YEAH
IT SEEMS WE DIDN'T MISS. BINGO! ITS EYES ARE BLINDED BY THE FLASH-GRENADE
WOOOW!

AL-
RIGHT!
FOLLOW
ME!
WE'RE
GOING TO
"HUNT"
IT!
CHARGE!



41
HAMAGUCHI
KAZUMA


チン
ピコピコ
7

MEMBERSHIP CARDS IN THE COUNTER
TCH...

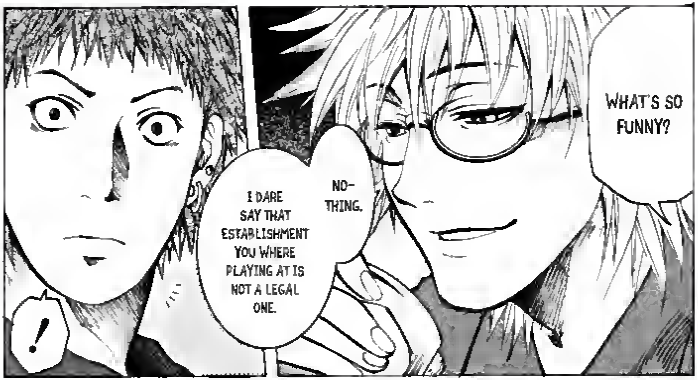
BARMAN, THE USUAL!
YES.
DAMNIT, I'M NOT GOING BACK TO THAT PLACE EVER AGAIN!
BUT NOW... WHAT ABOUT THIS MONTH'S LIVING EXPENSES?
カラン
カラン
WELCOME.
!
SLATTER
EH...
S-SORRY
I SPILLED IT.
NO PROBLEM.
41

DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT
LEAVING THAT ASIDE, WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU?
YOU SEEM TO BE IN A VERY BAD MOOD
.....
I PLAYED OVER OVER 1000 GAMES BUT I GOT NOTHING.
?

I'M TALKING ABOUT PACHISLO" DON'T YOU KNOW ABOUT IT?
IN PACHISLO THERE IS A CEILING" IT'S ILLEGAL THAT THE MACHINE DOESN'T GIVE A PRIZE AFTER PLAYING A FIXED NUMBER OF GAMES.
I SEE, PACHISLO
HE HE HE ...

*TN: JAPANESE VERSION OF SLOTS MACHINES WITH SOME UNIQUE FEATURES THAT MAKE EASIER HITTING THE JACKPOT

*TN: THE MAXIMUM NUMBER OF GAMES THAT CAN BE PLAYED WITHOUT THE PACHISLO MACHINE RELEASING A BONUS.


WHAT'S SO FUNNY?
NO-THING.
I DARE SAY THAT ESTABLISHMENT YOU WHERE PLAYING AT IS NOT A LEGAL ONE.
!

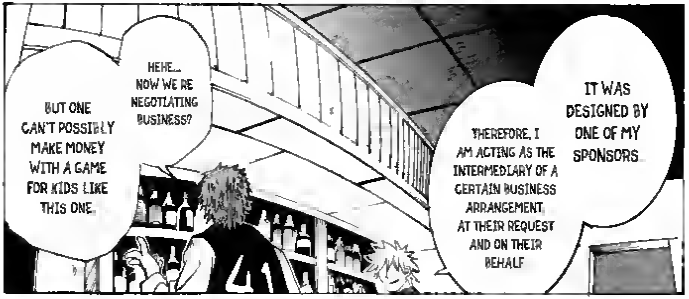
I GUESS YOU WERE PLAYING IN AN ALLEY SHOP WITH A LARGE ROW OF GAMBLING MACHINES.
AN ORDINARY ESTABLISHMENT WOULD OPEN IN A MORE CONSPICUOUS PLACE, RIGHT?
WE ARE INSIDE AN ALLEY AND THERE ARE NO PACHISLO SIGNBOARDS AROUND HERE.
BAR

NOTHING IS CONSIDERED ILLEGAL IN SUCH ESTABLISHMENTS, DON'T YOU AGREE?
TCH

IN ANY CASE, GAMBLING SHOULD BE DONE IN MODERATION.
HUMPH. YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND
WHAT I WANT IS TO EARN MONEY WHILE HAVING A GOOD TIME.
HAVING A GOOD TIME?
*TN: THE JAPANESE GOVERNMENT'S EMPLOYMENT SERVICE CENTER.
ANYHOW, EVEN IF I WENT TO HELLO WORK*, ALL PROFITABLE JOBS WOULD BE ALREADY TAKEN.
ゴオオオ
IN THAT CASE, I'D RATHER ENJOY MYSELF AND MAKE A BIT OF DOSH ON THE SIDE!
THEN, HOW ABOUT SOMETHING LIKE THIS?
スッ
OH, WELL

DON'T YOU KNOW IT? 'MEBIUSCLAN', AN ONLINE GAME PLAYED BY 3 MILLION PEOPLE ALL OVER THE WORLD.
Mebiusclan
メビウスクラン
WHAT'S THAT?

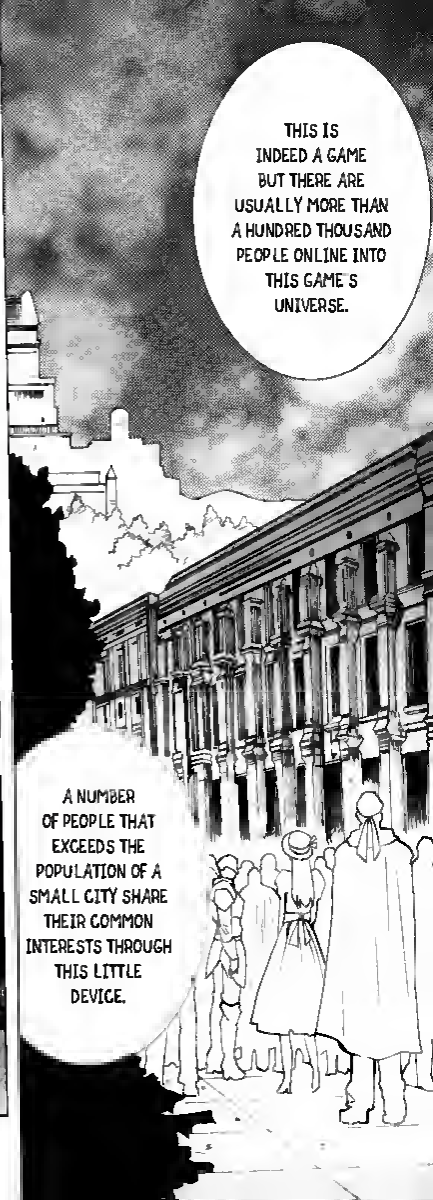
YES, I'D LIKE YOU TO PLAY THIS GAME.
AN ONLINE GAME?

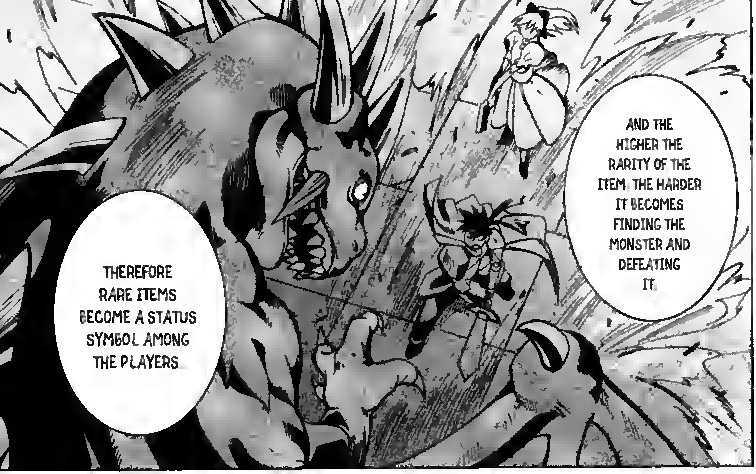

BUT ONE CAN'T POSSIBLY MAKE MONEY WITH A GAME FOR KIDS LIKE THIS ONE.
HEHE... NOW WE'RE NEGOTIATING BUSINESS?
THEREFORE, I AM ACTING AS THE INTERMEDIARY OF A CERTAIN BUSINESS ARRANGEMENT, AT THEIR REQUEST AND ON THEIR BEHALF
IT WAS DESIGNED BY ONE OF MY SPONSORS.

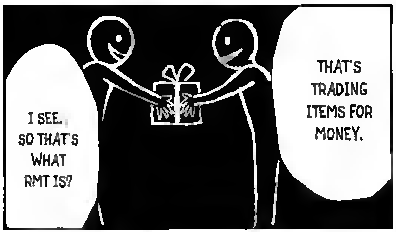
WHAT?
DO YOU KNOW THAT EXPRESSION?
RMT... REAL MONEY TRADE.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
IN SHORT, AMONG THAT MANY PEOPLE THERE ARE RICH ONES INTERESTED IN PECULIAR THINGS

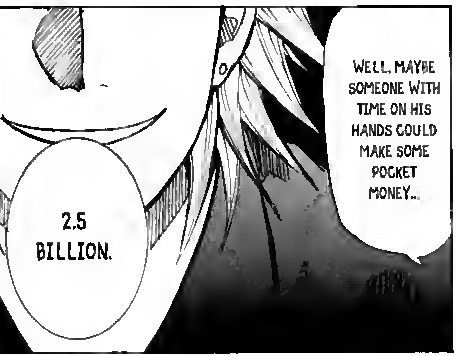
IN THIS GAME YOU CAN ONLY GET ITEMS BY DEFEATING MONSTERS.


THIS IS INDEED A GAME BUT THERE ARE USUALLY MORE THAN A HUNDRED THOUSAND PEOPLE ONLINE INTO THIS GAME S UNIVERSE.
A NUMBER OF PEOPLE THAT EXCEEDS THE POPULATION OF A SMALL CITY SHARE THEIR COMMON INTERESTS THROUGH THIS LITTLE DEVICE.

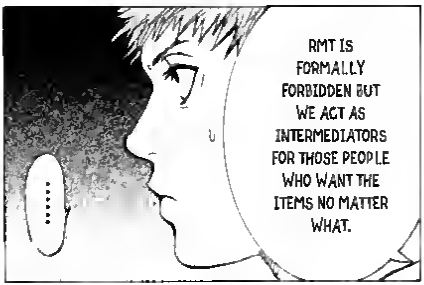

THEREFORE RARE ITEMS BECOME A STATUS SYMBOL AMONG THE PLAYERS.
AND THE HIGHER THE RARITY OF THE ITEM, THE HARDER IT BECOMES FINDING THE MONSTER AND DEFEATING IT.


I SEE. SO THAT'S WHAT RMT IS?
THAT'S TRADING ITEMS FOR MONEY.

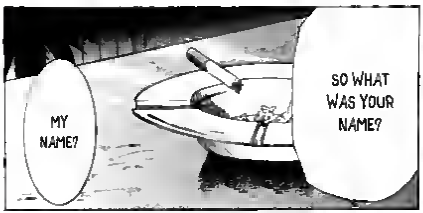
AH, WELL, THOSE ARE THE GAME PREMISES.
AND THERE IS ANOTHER WAY TO OBTAIN RARE ITEMS EVEN WITHOUT FIGHTING MONSTERS.


WELL, MAYBE SOMEONE WITH TIME ON HIS HANDS COULD MAKE SOME POCKET MONEY...
2.5 BILLION.

2.5 BILLION YEN
THAT'S THE HIGHEST SUM PAID FOR A TRADED ITEM SO FAR.
!

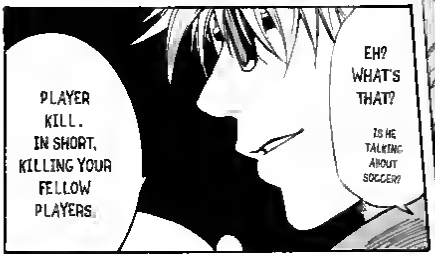

RMT IS FORMALLY FORBIDDEN BUT WE ACT AS INTERMEDIATORS FOR THOSE PEOPLE WHO WANT THE ITEMS NO MATTER WHAT.
.....

FROM A COMMON PERSPECTIVE IT'S AN INCREDIBLE AMOUNT OF MONEY BUT...
AMONG 3 MILLION PEOPLE, THERE ARE THOSE WHO WOULD GLADLY PAY THAT SOME FOR A WORTHY ADDITION TO THEIR COLLECTION.


SO WHAT WAS YOUR NAME?
MY NAME?

KUDAN...
I AM CALLED KUDAN.
KUDAN-SAN... WELL, DOES THIS GAME HAVE A TRICK?
HEHEHE... SO THE NEGOTIATIONS ARE OVER!
THEN I'LL GET YOU AN ACCOUNT
AH YES.. A TRICK. I WOULDN'T ADVISE YOU TO FIGHT ALONE.
FIGHT ALWAYS WITH A TEAM.
!
TEAM HUNTING? NOT BAD.
IN FACT EVEN I USED TO TEAM UP WITH SOME BUDDIES IN THE PAST
GASP

*P.K. = "PLAYER KILL" IN MMORPGS



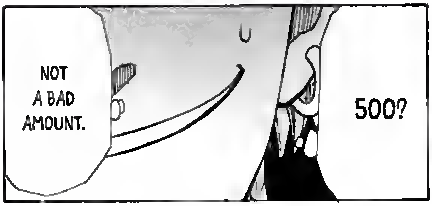
AAAGH!
!!
TCH!

STOP THE THANKING AND GIVE ME A HAND HERE!
T-THANKS!
!!
USING "HEAL". ASUKA'S LIFE IS RESTORED.
B-BUT YOU SAVED ME! WHAT'S YOUR NAME?
MINE IS ASUKA
!
ASUKA?
WHAT'S THE MATTER?
NOTHING

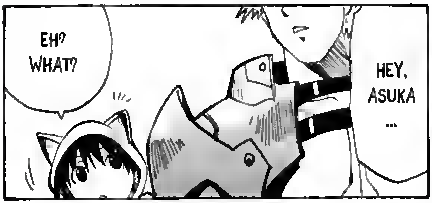
!
THAT'S HOW MY FORMER BUDDIES CALLED ME.
YOU CAN CALL ME... 'KAZUMA'.
GET HERE QUICKLY! WE WILL LAUNCH AN ALL-OUT ATTACK!
HEY YOU! GET A MOVE ON!
OK!
YEAH!
WELL THEN, SHALL WE GO, KAZUMA?
TCH.. ACTING ALL LEADER-LIKE...

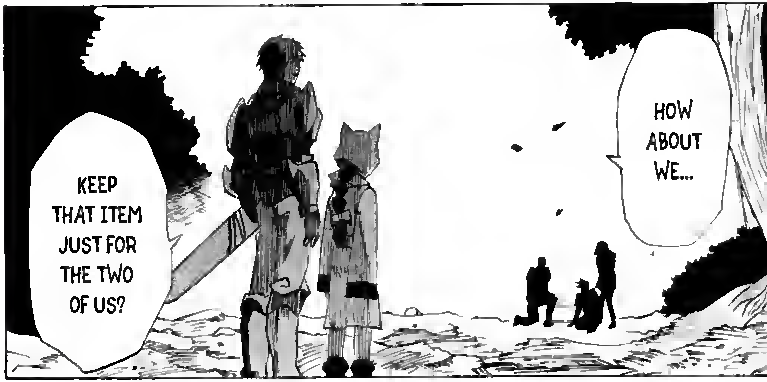
All party members get an attack power-up!
Des-truction Symphony!
COME ON! LET'S END THIS!
Epsonia Cannon!
Iron Fist!

CROSS SLASH
WE DID IT.
WE GOT AN ITEM!
ISN'T THIS AN "ODIN'S HAMMER"?


NOT A BAD AMOUNT.
500?

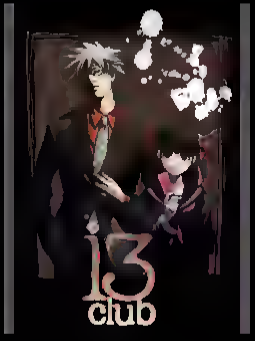
ITS TRADING VALUE IS OVER 500!
わあっ


EH? WHAT?
HEY, ASUKA ...


HOW ABOUT WE...
KEEP THAT ITEM JUST FOR THE TWO OF US?

13 CLUB

by SHIHIRA Tatsuya



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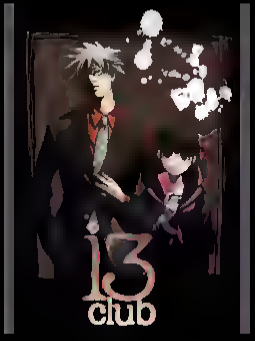

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Story 4 RMT -Part 2-
Chapter 10

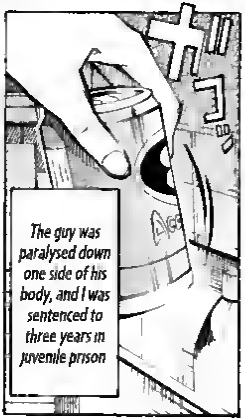
HEY KAZUMA!
WHAT SHOULD WE DO ABOUT THE NEXT HUNT?
HMM ?
WANT TO TARGET SOME DUDES IN AKIBA?
I HEARD THAT THOSE GUYS ARE LOADED, AND THEY SPEND ALL OF THEIR MONEY ON GAMES OR FIGURINES.
FUCK!
IF THE PIG DOESN'T SQUEAL, I WILL GET BORED!!
HA!
AHA HAH A!

UW...
UW AAA AH!
!!
KYA AH!
!!
UGH!
BASTARD!

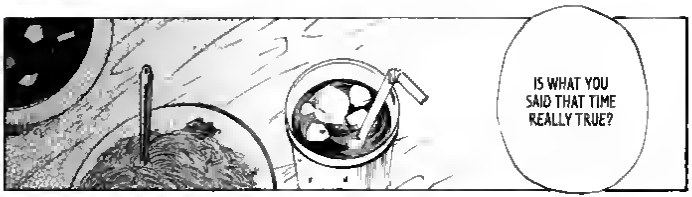
メキッ
GYAH!
FUCK YOU, BASTARD!
YOU LIT-TLE_
KA-KAZUMA! STOP IT!
YOU'RE GONNA KILL HIM!

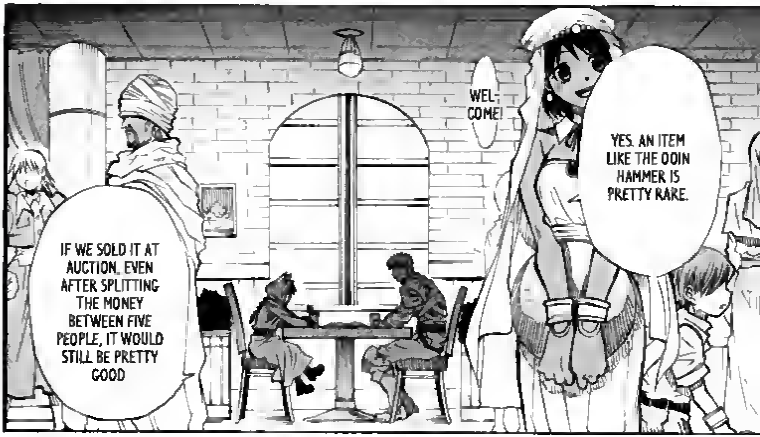
An old dream...
Haa
Haa

Even now, I haven't heard anything about her
Beep
Beep
That was the last time I had met with that Asuka


The guy was paralysed down one side of his body, and I was sentenced to three years in juvenile prison

Received mail – 1 new message
Username: Asuka


IS WHAT YOU SAID THAT TIME REALLY TRUE?


WEL-COME!
YES. AN ITEM LIKE THE ODIN HAMMER IS PRETTY RARE.
IF WE SOLD IT AT AUCTION, EVEN AFTER SPLITTING THE MONEY BETWEEN FIVE PEOPLE, IT WOULD STILL BE PRETTY GOOD

BUT IF YOU DID SOMETHING LIKE THAT, WOULDN'T WE HAVE TROUBLE MAKING PARTIES IN THE FUTURE ..?
WE WOULD JUST HAVE TO CHANGE OUR AVATARS
!

HOWEVER, WHAT IF IT WERE JUST TO BE BETWEEN TWO PEOPLE?
.....

EVEN YOUR USERNAME IS PROBABLY NOT YOUR REAL NAME
IF YOU JUST CHANGE YOUR AVATAR AND USERNAME, YOU CAN CONTINUE TO PLAY NORMALLY
AM I WRONG?
IT'S NOT AS IF YOU ACTUALLY LOOK LIKE THAT IN REAL LIFE, RIGHT?
WELL... THAT'S TRUE, I GUESS...
BUT I AM PRETTY SURE IT'S PROHIBITED TO ATTACK OTHER PLAYERS IN THIS GAME!
!
AND THEY SAY THERE'S A REALLY HEAVY PUNISHMENT...
I ALSO HEARD ABOUT THAT...

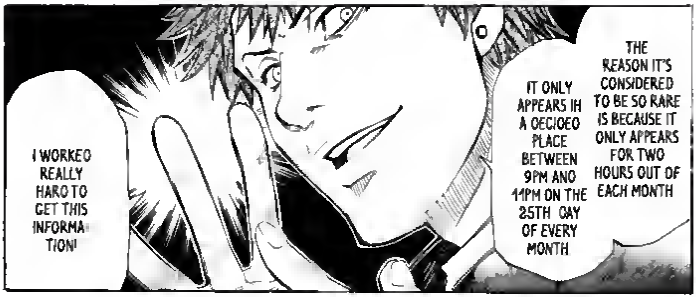
NO WORRIES. AS LONG AS YOU FOLLOW THE GAME RULES YOU HAVE NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT.
PUNISH-MENT?
TRADER
TRADERS CAN TAKE THE ITEMS THEY HOPE TO SELL FROM THIS STORAGE PLACE AND PUT THEM ON AUCTION.
ITEM OBTAINED FROM DEFEATING AN ENEMY
ITEM STORAGE
ALL THE ITEMS THAT YOU STEAL FROM MONSTERS WILL BE LEFT TEMPORARILY IN THE ITEM STORAGE THAT YOU USE AS A TRADER.
WELL THEN LET ME EXPLAIN HOW THE AUCTION SYSTEM WORKS
AUCTION
TRADERS WILL GIVE THE ITEMS TO THE BIDDER WHO BEAT THE OTHERS' PRICES. HOWEVER, HE WILL ALSO GIVE A COMMISSION TO THE HOST OF THE TRADING PARTY
THE BIDDER WHO OFFERS THE MOST WILL WIN THE ITEM AT THE END OF THAT PERIOD
THE AUCTIONS LAST FOR ONE WEEK!

ediusclan
YOU CAN MAKE MONEY WHILE HAVING FUN.
WE REALLY DO HOPE THAT YOU WILL FIND SOME VERY RARE ITEMS.
THE MORE EXPENSIVE THE ITEM THE MORE WE EARN IN COMMISSION AS THE MIDDLEMEN
THIS SHOULD BE PERFECT FOR SOMEONE LIKE YOU.
ALRIGHT, LISTEN CAREFULLY, ASUKA!
KUKU.. INDEED
BUT FOR EVERY RULE, THERE'S AN EXCEPTION

Smash!

KAZUMA
ARE YOU SURE IT WAS HERE?
YES. THE LOCATION OF THE TARGET IS SSERB IT HAS TO BE IN THE PALACE RUINS.

AMAZING! YOU FOUND IT...
THE LOCATION OF THE ULTRA-RARE MONSTER "AUDREY"
WELL, YOU KNOW...

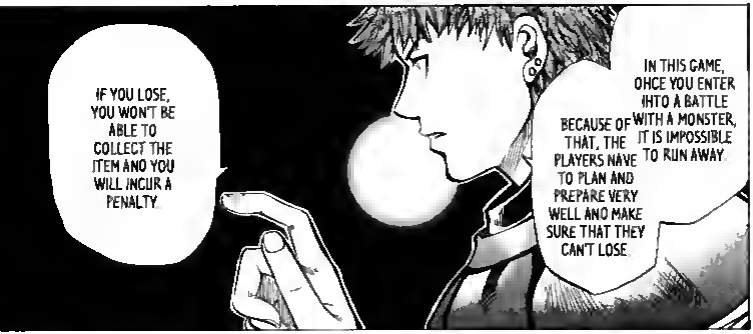

I WORKED REALLY HARD TO GET THIS INFORMATION!
IT ONLY APPEARS IN A DECIDED PLACE BETWEEN 9PM AND 11PM ON THE 25TH DAY OF EVERY MONTH
THE REASON IT'S CONSIDERED TO BE SO RARE IS BECAUSE IT ONLY APPEARS FOR TWO HOURS OUT OF EACH MONTH

THE AUCTION FOR THE HAMMER FINISHES IN JUST HALF A DAY, SO IF WE SELL THE ITEM FROM AUDREY AS WELL, WE CAN AFFORD A HUGE PARTY!
IN TERMS OF LEVEL, AUDREY IS ONLY A W-CLASS, SO EVEN WITHOUT OUR LEADER WE SHOULD MAKE EASY WORK OF IT!
Hahaha! You did well, Kazuma!

ゴゴゴゴ…
!
IT'S HERE.!
……

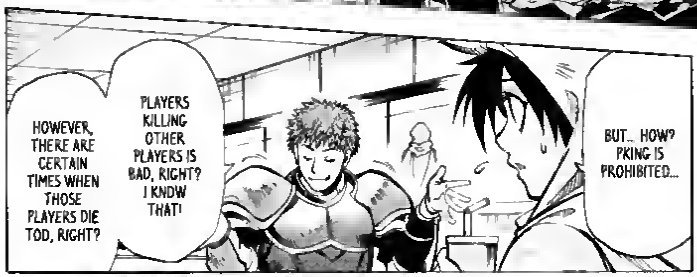
Ra
wrr
aah!
IT'S AUD REY!
EVERYONE, GET INTO BATTLE FORMA-TION!
LISTEN UP, ASUKA.
.....

IT HAPPENED ABOUT TWO MONTHS AFTER I STARTED THIS GAME...
AT THAT TIME I WAS IMMERSING MYSELF NIGHT AND DAY IN AN ATTEMPT TO UNDERSTAND THE GAME BETTER.
AHO AT THAT POINT, A ONE OUT OF MILLION SET OF REQUIRE-MENTS WAS MET
REQUIRE-MENTS?


IN THIS GAME, ONCE YOU ENTER INTO A BATTLE WITH A MONSTER, IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO RUN AWAY.
BECAUSE OF THAT, THE PLAYERS HAVE TO PLAN AND PREPARE VERY WELL AND MAKE SURE THAT THEY CAN'T LOSE.
IF YOU LOSE, YOU WON'T BE ABLE TO COLLECT THE ITEM AND YOU WILL INCUR A PENALTY.

YOU WON'T BE ABLE TO LOG IN FOR A CERTAIN PERIOD AFTER LOSING.
THEY SAY IT IS SO THAT THE USERS CAN FEEL THE "DEATH" OF THE CHARACTER, EVEN IF IT IS NOT IN THE REAL WORLD.
WE ARE GOING TO USE THAT TO OUR ADVANTAGE!
?

DAMN IT! HE HID HIS MAIN BODY!
AND THEN WE WILL TAKE THE MONEY FOR THAT ITEM.
WE WILL MAKE SURE THEY LOSE A DAY NO, HALF A DAY BEFORE THE AUCTION CLOSES. THAT WAY THEY WON'T BE ABLE TO COME BACK IN TIME.
WE WILL SPRING THE TRAP RIGHT BEFORE THE AUCTION CLOSES.


HOWEVER, THERE ARE CERTAIN TIMES WHEN THOSE PLAYERS DIE TOO, RIGHT?
PLAYERS KILLING OTHER PLAYERS IS BAD, RIGHT? I KNOW THAT!
BUT... HOW? PKING IS PROHIBITED...

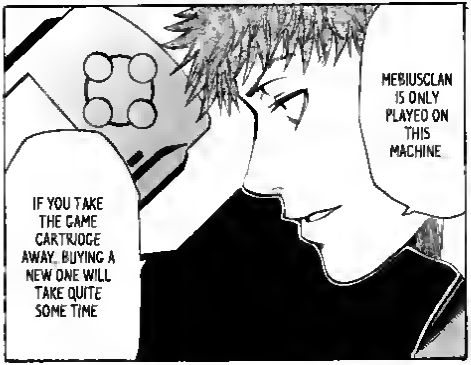
A TEAM MEMBER SUDDENLY DECIDED NOT TO FIGHT?
WHAT IF..
POP
FIGHTING STRONG MONSTERS IS EACH PLAYER'S RIGHT.

AS LONG AS NOBODY USES AN ITEM TO SAVE THEM FROM THAT STATE, IT'S FINE
THE SAME AS WHEN I SAVED YOU IN THAT BATTLEFIELD BEFORE
.....
I don't have to do anything...
KAZUMA! QUICKLY! SAVE HIM!
Eh...!
Will bring down themselves!
Those who are consumed by greed
AAAAHHHH!

KAZUMA ?
AH, SORRY ABOUT THAT. I FORGOT TO MENTION.
AUDREY ITSELF IS PRETTY WEAK, BECAUSE IT IS ONLY A TRAP TYPE.
IF YOU STEP INSIDE IT'S TRAP RADIUS LIKE HE JUST DID...
IT'S BASICALLY...
POP
IMPOSSIBLE TO SAVE YOU

KYAAH!
KAZUMA!
YOU ...!
BUT I KNOW A WAY..
YES, HE IS REALLY FAST AND SMART TOO
BUT I REALLY DON'T THINK THE LEADER IS GOING TO FALL FOR A TRAP LIKE THAT...
WHEN WE MADE THE PARTY, WE MADE LITTLE INTROOU-CTIONS TO EACH OTHER, REMEMBER?
I PRETENDED TO BE A NOOB THEN.
!
HOW DO YOU...?
!
AND, AFTER ALL, HE LIVES IN THE NEIGH-BOURING CITY, RIGHT?

WHEN I TALKED A BIT ABOUT MYSELF, HE OPENED UP TO ME AND EVEN TALKED ABOUT SOME OF HIS PERSONAL INFORMATION.
OF COURSE, THE INFORMATION I GAVE TO THE REST OF YOU WAS MOSTLY JUST LIES...
BUT IT'S FINE AS I WAS ABLE TO PINPOINT HIS LOCATION



IRL= In real life

DURING THAT TIME, WE WILL TAKE THE AUCTION MONEY AND WIPE OUR USERNAMES.
AND AFTER THAT WE WON'T LEAVE ANY TRACE BEHIND, SO WE'LL BE FINE.
.....

UM, KAZUMA...
IF THERE ARE FOUR OF US, THEY WILL THINK IT'S AN EASY WIN.
Simple, right?
WELL, IT'S NOT AS IF YOU NEED TO DO MUCH
AND ONE MORE THING... I WANT YOU TO HELP ME TAKE CARE OF THOSE OTHER TWO BEFORE THAT.

T/N: He uses the male word for "me"

I HOPE IT GOES BETTER THIS TIME
.....
WELL THEN IT'S TIME FOR ME TO TAKE CARE OF THE LEADER.
YOU KEEP AN EYE ON THESE GUYS UNTIL YOU'RE SURE THEY'RE FINISHED
AFTER THAT, WE'LL MEET AS PLANNED, 'KAY?

ピンポーン
LITTLE RICH KID..
EXCUSE ME,
IT'S THE COURIER SERVICE
IT'S HERE...
SFX: SILENCE
DAMN.
IS HE OUT OF THE HOUSE..?
!
UM...
DID YOU NEED SOMETHING FROM MY PLACE?
!!

KAZUMA ...?!
A- ASUKA?!
AND..
HE IS..!

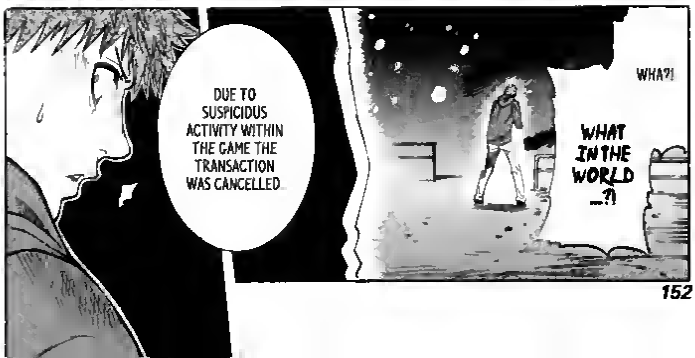
JUST WHEN I THOUGHT YOU HAD DISAPPEARED FROM THE GROUP EARLY... WHY ARE YOU WITH THIS GUY?!
YOU...
!!
NO!
LET GO OF ME!
!?
YOU WENT WAY TOO FAR...
YOU ALMOST KILLED SOMEONE!
I GOT AS FAR AWAY FROM YOU AS POSSIBLE TO DO SOMETHING I REALLY ENJOY! ARE YOU TELLING ME THERE'S SOMETHING WRONG WITH THAT?!
!
YOU'RE THAT GUY FROM...?!
Y-YOU..
ASUKA...?!

PLEASE.. NO VIOLENCE!
SHE... SHE REFLECTED AFTER THAT AND HAS BEEN TAKING CARE OF ME SINCE THEN.
SO, PLEASE, DON'T..
PLEASE LEAVE...
I GET IT..
I WON'T DO ANYTHING. SO JUST HAND OVER THAT GAME SYSTEM
!?
WHAT?!
KAZUMA?!
YOU'RE DOING THESE KINDS OF THINGS AGAIN?!
CUT IT OUT ALREADY! YOU'RE NOT A KID ANYMORE!
...!

I DON'T CARE WHAT YOU THINK, JUST GIVE IT TO ME!
AH?!
AREN'T YOU ASHAMED OF YOUR-SELF?!
SURELY YOU CAN EARN ENOUGH MONEY TO BUY YOURSELF A GAME SYSTEM, RIGHT?!
KAZUMA!
HAA
HAA
TO THINK THAT ASUKA WOULD BE IN A PLACE LIKE THAT...
DAMN IT! NO... RATHER THAN THAT...

Odin Hammer
Transaction cancelled
TOTAL MONEY EARNED: 0 YEN
I HAVE TO CHECK THE AUCTION!

!!?


DUE TO SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY WITHIN THE GAME THE TRANSACTION WAS CANCELLED
WHA?!
WHAT IN THE WORLD...?!

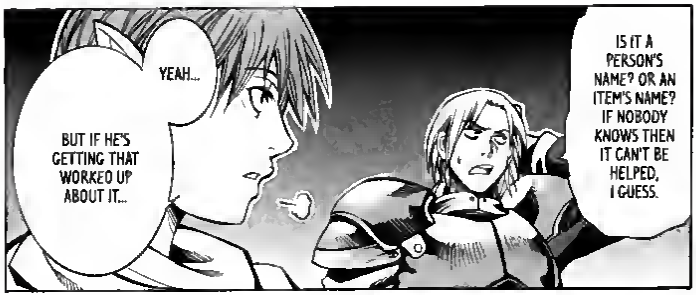
YOU...
I THOUGHT I WARNED YOU THAT PKING WAS PROHIBITED?
WHA-WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? I DIDN'T TOUCH A SINGLE PERSON IN THE GAME!
WHAT YOU DID IS CALLED AN MPK. USING MONSTERS TO KILL OTHER PLAYERS. OBVIOUSLY THIS COUNTS AS A TYPE OF PK.
WAIT... HOW DO YOU KNOW ALL THIS?

SORRY ABOUT THAT...
I WAS ASKED TO KEEP AN EYE ON YOU
MobileScan
THIS IS MY PARTNER, SHE'S CALLED KASUKA
IT APPEARS THAT SHE WAS CALLED ASUKA IN THE GAME, THOUGH
THE STORY OF YOUR PAST INTERESTED ME, SO I TOOK THE LIBERTY OF GETTING HER INTO YOUR PARTY

SHIT..
.....
BY THE WAY, THE TWO PLAYERS YOU PUSHED INTO THE TRAP WERE ALSO SAVED BY HER.
HAHA...
KUKU KU...
HUH?
IT SEEMS THAT WHETHER IT WAS REALITY OR GAME..
ASUKA STILL REJECTED ME...

THE TRUE NATURE OF REAL MONEY TRADE..
IS THAT A PARTICULAR GOOD HAS A LOT OF VALUE TO A CERTAIN PERSON, AND VERY LITTLE TO OTHERS
THAT GOOD HAS BEEN TRANSFORMED, IN THE GAME, INTO A PARTICULAR ITEM.
WHAT THAT MEANS TO PEOPLE IN REAL LIFE, IS UP TO THEM TO DECIDE.
SO .. AS YOUR PUNISHMENT, HOW ABOUT I TAKE SOMETHING THAT YOU VALUE AWAY FROM YOU ..
HOW ABOUT I HAVE YOU TRADE THOSE MEMORIES YOU MADE WITH ASUKA.

ASUKA
DOESN'T ANYONE KNOW ABOUT ASUKA?
A FEW MONTHS LATER, IN MEBIUSCLAN
ASUKA
ACTUALLY, I HEAR HE DOESN'T KNOW ANYTHING MORE THAN THAT IT'S A NAME OF SOMETHING...
WHAT THE HELL?
SIGH... WHAT THE HELL DOES "ASUKA" MEAN, I WONDER?
AH, THAT GUY. I HEAR HE'S BEEN WANDERING AROUND HERE LIKE THAT FOR THE LAST TWO MONTHS.
WHAT'S WITH HIM...?
He has a strange aura...


IS IT A PERSON'S NAME? OR AN ITEM'S NAME? IF NOBODY KNOWS THEN IT CAN'T BE HELPED, I GUESS.
YEAH...
BUT IF HE'S GETTING THAT WORKED UP ABOUT IT...

MAYBE IT'S AN ULTRA-RARE ITEM.
Asuka
Asuka
Story 4 / End

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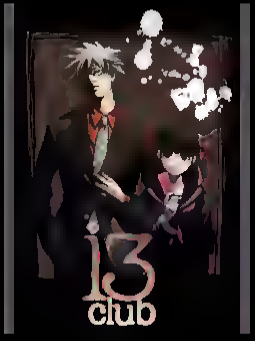

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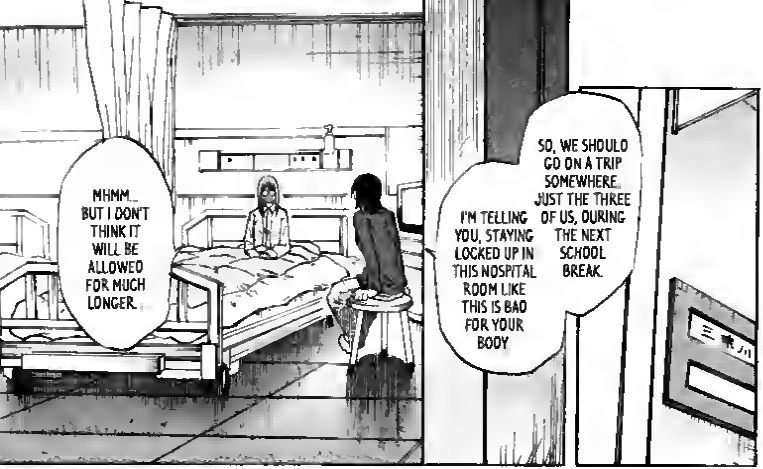
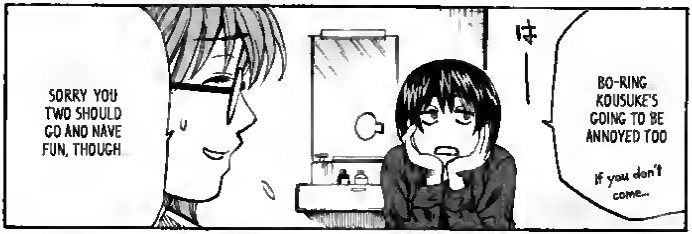
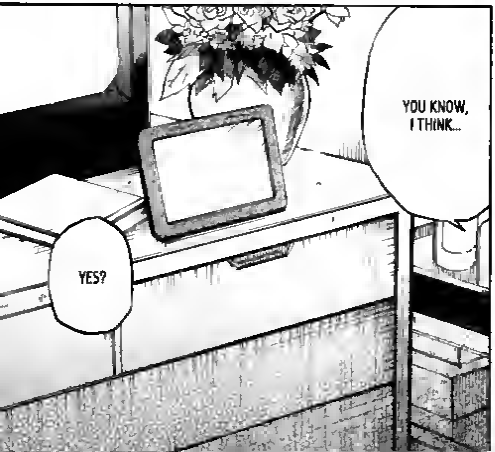
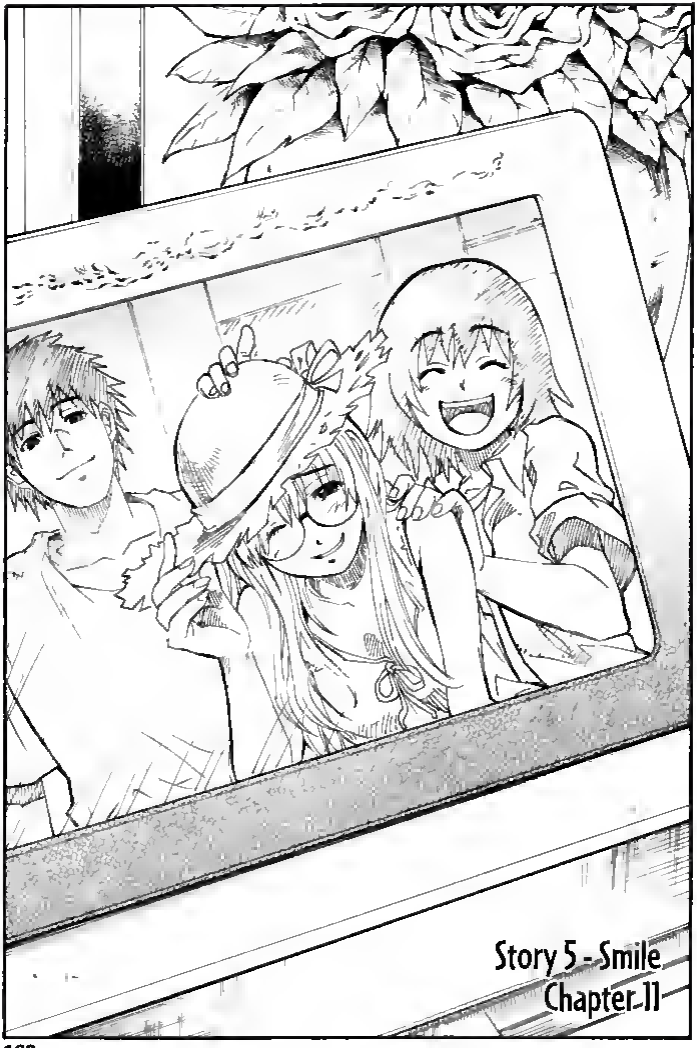

MHMM... BUT I DON'T THINK IT WILL BE ALLOWED FOR MUCH LONGER.
I'M TELLING YOU, STAYING LOCKED UP IN THIS HOSPITAL ROOM LIKE THIS IS BAD FOR YOUR BODY
SO, WE SHOULD GO ON A TRIP SOMEWHERE. JUST THE THREE OF US, DURING THE NEXT SCHOOL BREAK.

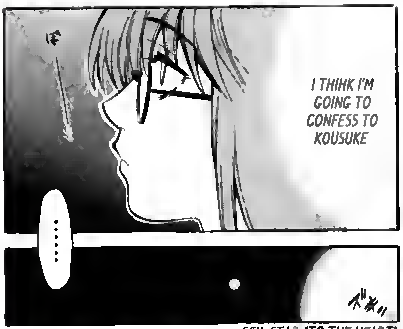

SORRY YOU TWO SHOULD GO AND HAVE FUN, THOUGH
は！
BO-RING KOUSUKE'S GOING TO BE ANNOYED TOO
If you don't come...


YES?
YOU KNOW, I THINK...

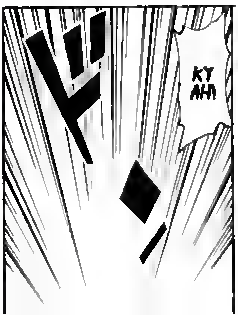
……

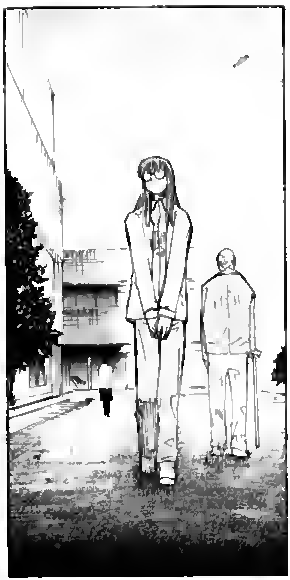
I TNINK I'M GOING TO CONFESS TO KOUSUKE.
OH...
I'M SORRY YUUKI WHAT I M OOING IS UNFAIR, ISN'T IT?
EN?! NO NO, OON'T WORRY ABOUT IT
NE'S JUST A CHILONOOO FRIENO... IT'S NOT LIKE THAT, ANYWAY.
I'm cheering for you.


Story 5 - Smile
Chapter 11



SFX. STAB (TO THE HEART)





THAT HURTS...

FUFU... I WAS JUST JOKING IS THERE ANYTHING WEIGHING ON YOUR MIND?
WAH! SO MANY PHONES.
I WAS ZONING OUT...
AH... I'M SORRY!

YOU MIGHT FEEL BETTER AFTERWARDS.
WOULD YOU MIND TELLING ME WHAT IT IS?
!

THE DOCTOR MADE THAT CLEAR TO ME JUST RECENTLY.
.....

HALF A YEAR AGO, I WAS DIAGNOSED WITH CANCER, AND I HAVE BEEN HOSPITALISED SINCE THEN.
I WILL NOT LIVE FOR MORE THAN THREE YEARS

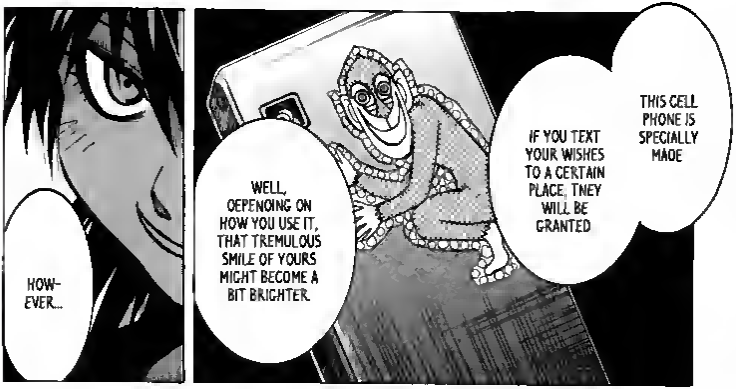
BUT WHAT I'M WORRYING ABOUT ISN'T THAT...

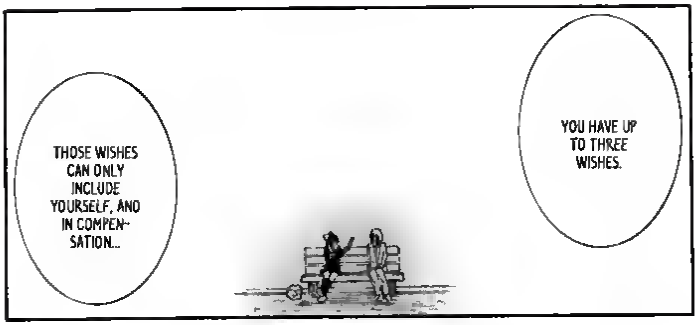
YOU SEE, I HAVE THIS GUY I LIKE... HE IS MY CHILDHOOD FRIEND, KOUSUKE
AND THEN THERE'S AYA-CHAN, A FRIEND FROM MIDDLE SCHOOL... THE THREE OF US ALWAYS GOT ALONG WELL.
BUT EVER SINCE I WAS HOSPITALISED, THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN US HAS CHANGED

I DON'T THINK I'LL HAVE THE CONFIDENCE TO BE ABLE TO CONGRATULATE THEM
IF THOSE TWO START TO GO OUT...
.....
YOU'RE PRETTY DUMB, AREN'T YOU?
EH?
BUT IT CAN'T BE HELPED, RIGHT? I MEAN, I'M JUST AS PRETTY AS SHE IS..
HEH.. WELL, I SUPPOSE TELLING YOU THAT WON'T REALLY MEAN ANYTHING... HAHA...
.....

AFTER LIVING A LIFE WHERE YOU HAVE NEVER LISTENED TO YOUR EMOTIONS, THERE IS NOTHING MORE LEFT FOR YOU TO WORRY ABOUT NOW
USE THIS AND TRY TO FIND THAT SELF THAT YOU LOST

WHAT IS THAT?


THIS CELL PHONE IS SPECIALLY MADE
IF YOU TEXT YOUR WISHES TO A CERTAIN PLACE, THEY WILL BE GRANTED
WELL, DEPENDING ON HOW YOU USE IT, THAT TREMULOUS SMILE OF YOURS MIGHT BECOME A BIT BRIGHTER.
HOW-EVER...


YOU HAVE UP TO THREE WISHES.
THOSE WISHES CAN ONLY INCLUDE YOURSELF, AND IN COMPEN-SATION...

A few days later...

WHY DO YOU THINK I WENT OUT OF MY WAY TO—
HELLO, YOU TWO

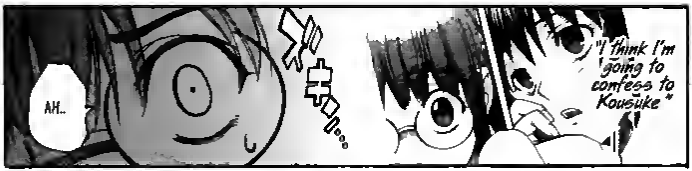
IF WE SHOW UP SO SUDDENLY, WON'T YUUKI BE SUR-PRISED?
Go! Walk! Walk!
BAKA... SURPRISING HER IS THE POINT!

That day...
Clutter
Clutter
Clutter
beep
beep
YU... YUUK?!
EHE HE
Healed...?!
You're joking...?!
MMH... IT SEEMS THAT IT HAS HEALED ♡
W-WHAT ABOUT YOUR BODY...?!

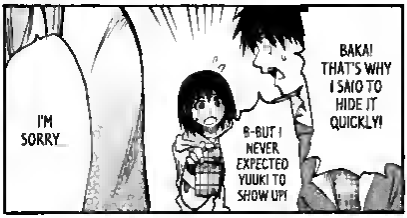
SENT MAIL DATE
2010/1/19 21:01
Make my body healthy again. Please
AND... SEND.
HA...
What am I doing? Seriously...
.....
BEEP
KYAAH?!
W-WHAT?!

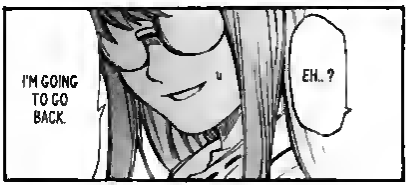
Received mail
2010/1/19 21:02
from monkeyhand.web
OK
The next morning
My cancer had disappeared
WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING AT?
Cell phone?
SHUT
EH?! UH... IT'S NOTHING, IT'S NOTHING!
SO... SO WHAT DO YOU TWO GO AND BUY?
CRUNCH
AH WELL.
THIS IS...
...!

宝石・Jewelry
PAU DE ARARA


"I think I'm going to confess to Kousuke"
AH..

AH...
YUUKI!!!


I'M SORRY...
B-BUT I NEVER EXPECTED YUUKI TO SHOW UP!
BAKA! THAT'S WHY I SAID TO HIDE IT QUICKLY!!


I'M GOING TO GO BACK.
EH..?

HAA
HAA
HAA
WHY AM I RUNNING, I WONDER.
EVEN THOUGH I TOLD MYSELF I WOULD CHEER THEM ON WITH A SMILE...
I CANNOT FORGET MY FEELINGS FOR KOUSUKE
I WANT A CHANCE TO TELL HIM MY FEELINGS
ANYTHING WOULD BE FINE.

I'M HOME...
Y-YUUKI! WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN?!
THIS IS TERRIBLE!
YOUR GREAT GRANDFATHER PASSED AWAY FROM OLD AGE, AND HE HAD DESIGNATED YOU AS HIS HEIR!
YOUR GREAT GRANDFATHER WAS A LANDLORD!
WHAT SHOULD WE DO?! THIS WILL BE A HUGE AMOUNT OF MONEY!

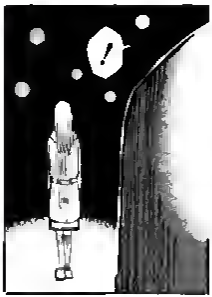
Anything would be fine...
.....
2010/1/22 17:32
Give me money
More money than I could ever use
A lot
A lot
A lot
A lot of money

If I could just divert his attention..

If I am going to forget everything...

If I could just congratulate them and leave them with a smile,
That would be my greatest happiness.

With a smile.
UH
UGH...!


!

As much as I play, and as many things as I buy, the tears never stop.
I don't want to forget, after all...

EH? YUUKI..?
IT'S REALLY YUUKI! WHAT ARE YOU DOING IN THOSE CLOTHES?
What an expensive coat...
I... I HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO CONTACT YOU FOR A LONG TIME. I'VE BEEN REALLY WORRIED ABOUT YOU.
.....
!
EH?
AYA.
I'M SORRY..
I... I DON'T KNOW WHAT I SHOULD DO ANYMORE..
Beep
SO...
I CAN ONLY DO THIS NOW..
Beep
Beep

I love you so much.
I'M SO SORRY...
10/1/31/20:05
monkeyhand.web
Make it so that Aya and Kousuke never appear before me again.
AYA,
KOUSUKE

IT'S FINE LIKE THIS...
That bag, it's from that time...?
!
CLATTER
.....
To Yuuki
TO YUUKI...?
WHAT IS THIS?!
A RING AND... A LETTER?

That's because Kousuke-san loves you.
That was just a lie.. a lie! He never even saw me that way from the beginning.
Dear Yuuki, I'm sorry that I surprised you that time.

EH...

But you just acted formally polite and put on that fake smile of yours so it appears I was just in the way haha
I thought that if I could pressure you, I might be able to bring out your true feelings a bit...
I'm just so irritated looking at you two like this

So I'm going to give this matching pair of rings to Kousuke and you:
To your happiness. Your Aya ♡
No No way ...
UWA AAAA H!

AS I THOUGHT ...
YOU'RE A REAL IDIOT.

A WAY TO RETURN TO THOSE TWO...!
I BEG YOU! ISN'T THERE ANOTHER WAY?!
YOU...!
CANCELLING WISHES IS POSSIBLE...
BUT YOU CAN'T CANCEL ONLY ONE WISH...
ALL THREE OF YOUR WISHES WILL DISAPPEAR SIMULTANEOUSLY.
AND...
!?

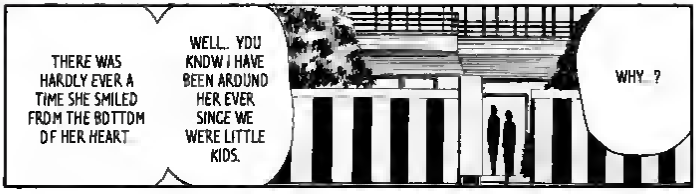
YDU CAN'T GET RID DF THE CDMPENSATIDN
JUST AS I TDLD YDU AT THE BEGINNING, FDR EACH WISH YDU MAKE, YDU WILL LDSE DNE YEAR FRDM YDUR LIFE.
IN DTHER WDRDS, IF YDUR LIFE JUST GDT SHDRTENED BY THREE YEARS AND YDU CANCELLED AS WELL, YDU WDULD RETURN TD YDUR DLD BDDY.
YDU MIGHT EVEN BE DEAD TDMDRRDW.

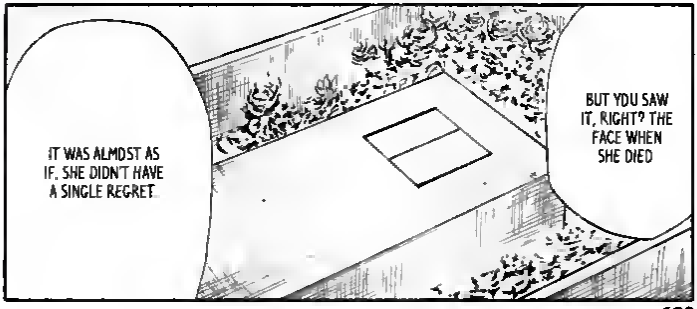
ARE YOU FINE WITH THAT...?
I DON'T CARE!

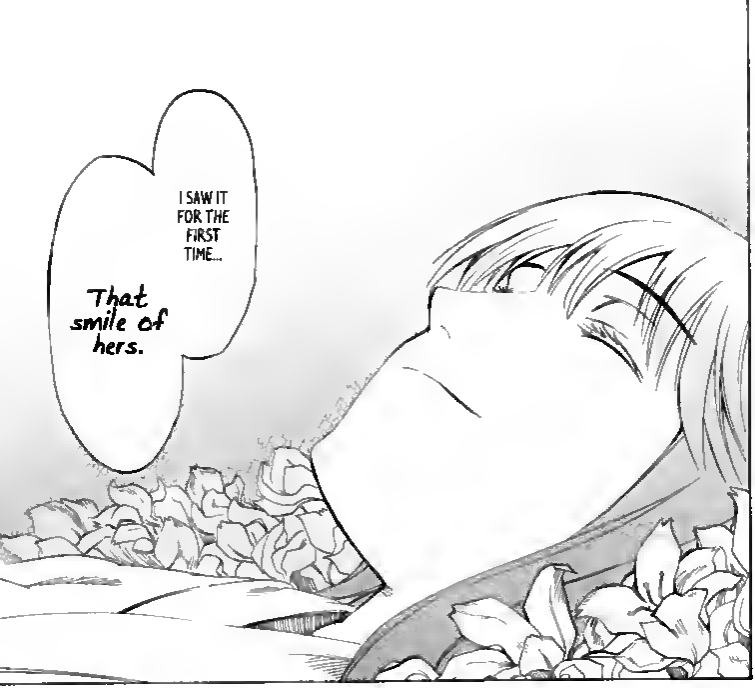
I WAS AN IDIOT
IF I JUST HAD THE COURAGE TO BE TRUE TO MYSELF THEN NONE OF THIS WOULD HAVE HAPPENED
SO, PLEASE
RETURN THOSE TWO BACK TO NORMAL

HONE-
STLY...
THAT GIRL
WAS SO
FOOLISH

NO MATTER HOW SICK SHE WAS... WHY DID SHE HAVE TO DIE SO QUICK?
.....
I... I AM SLIGHTLY JEALOUS OF HER.

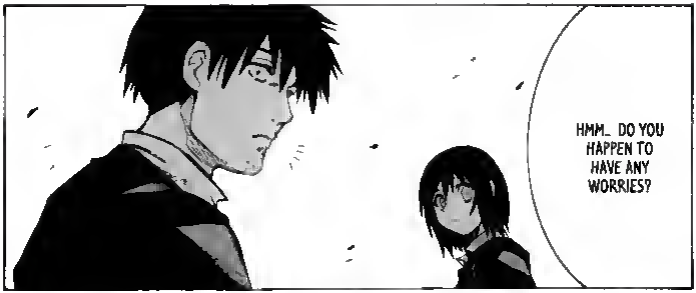

WHY...?
WELL... YOU KNOW I HAVE BEEN AROUND HER EVER SINCE WE WERE LITTLE KIDS.
THERE WAS HARDLY EVER A TIME SHE SMILED FROM THE BOTTOM OF HER HEART.


BUT YOU SAW IT, RIGHT? THE FACE WHEN SHE DIED
IT WAS ALMOST AS IF, SHE DIDN'T HAVE A SINGLE REGRET.


I SAW IT FOR THE FIRST TIME...
That smile of hers.

I, ON THE OTHER HAND, WILL HAVE A REGRET FOR MY ENTIRE LIFE.
IN THE END, I WASN'T EVEN ABLE TO HAND HER THE RING...
.....

EVEN THOUGH I DIDN'T WANT TO SEE IT LIKE THIS.
SERIOUSLY, SHE NEVER UNDER-STOOD OTHER PEOPLE...


HMM.. DO YOU HAPPEN TO HAVE ANY WORRIES?

IF YOU LIKE, I CAN GRANT ANY OF YOUR WISHES...

「13club」End

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